

# RURAL COUNCILLOR

SARM

2024  
SPRING

VOLUME 57 / #1

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# RURAL COUNCILLOR

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**Our Vision:** Strong, autonomous municipalities powered by vibrant, diverse economies that build a sustainable future for rural Saskatchewan.

**Our Mission:** To foster rural development in Saskatchewan and build strong, sustainable communities.

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## BY RAY ORB, SARM PRESIDENT

Greetings from SARM. Hopefully, you made it through the winter in good health and are looking forward to spring, a time of year when everyone has hope for a better year ahead.

In this article, I'd like to clarify what SARM members receive for their membership fees through advocacy work, programs, and services, as well as the importance of SARM's agricultural advocacy on behalf of the many producers in Saskatchewan.

### SARM & AGRICULTURE



As a result of provincial legislation passed in the early nineteen hundreds, SARM is mandated to be involved in **AGRICULTURE**. It is important that I expand on this. From the beginning, agriculture was identified as a key industry for SARM and was awarded responsibilities to advocate on behalf of the industry, which holds true to this day. Through provincial legislation, SARM must be a member of the Canada Grains Council, a Canada-wide organization that has deep roots in agriculture, and which has operated for many years to further the best interests of not only the agriculture industry, but also individual farmers. The production, transportation, and marketing of grain crops and livestock has changed greatly over the years, and so has SARM. We have grown with the agriculture industry in many ways, including the addition of various programs that assist farmers and ranchers across the province. SARM has presented many times to senior levels of government including testifying in front of multiple House of Commons and Senate standing committees. On top of that, we have had in-person meetings with both the federal and provincial Ministers of Agriculture over the past four months, and our relationship is

strong with both. Please follow SARM on social media to see the many activities conducted that support Saskatchewan's most important industry.

Over the past year, effective communications and getting SARM's messages out has been a focus. I have been interviewed more than 90 times since last year at this time; discussing the many issues related to the industry including *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*, wildlife damage, and the destructive federal environmental policies. SARM has also contributed to over 330 articles in 74 different media outlets over 2023. I am very proud of this, and our entire team. What an accomplishment.

SARM knows it is important to collaborate with other farm and commodity groups, so we have created a strong strategic partnership with both the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association and the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association. Over the past year, these passionate stakeholders have met four times to ensure effective communication and transparency.

SARM has a long-standing committee that focuses on the matters that are important to producers. The Agriculture and Economy Committee meets monthly and has a mandate to advocate around the many federal and provincial agriculture issues, including the ones that our producers continually face in Saskatchewan's rural municipalities (RM). This allows us to be proactive in our advocacy.

### Focusing on some of the current issues facing producers:

The federal environmental policies and the agriculture industry continue to clash. These federal policies, including the carbon tax and the Clean Fuel Standard, quite simply increase the cost of doing business while having next to little effect on the environment. We also must be aware of the threat of fertilizer emission reduction policies, as well as the threat of forcing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions in beef cattle. These policies will only make the agriculture industry less feasible. We are continually told that every industry must reduce emissions, but does this make sense? And does the agriculture industry need to as it already uses advanced farming practices that lead the way in lowering emissions.

Taking a closer look at the federal government's issues with climate change. Canada contributes approximately 1.6% of the global GHG emissions. While doing so, our federal government is forcing us to reduce emissions while the large emitters around the world are not. I believe this seems to be counterproductive. The federal government is deliberately hurting Western Canadian industries, in particular, oil & gas, and agriculture, to appease those who are forcing the acceptance of the Green Energy concept. We need to continue pushing back.

## SARM ON COMMITTEES



The SARM Board of Directors are appointed to over 80 committees. Check out the board page at SARM.ca to see each board member's responsibility on these committees.

### I wish to highlight a few here:

The Rural Indigenous Relations Committee is extremely important to SARM. The committee provides SARM the opportunity to learn from and develop relationships with Indigenous stakeholders.

SARM directors also meet monthly as the Municipal Oversight Committee. This committee focuses on the many moving parts involved in the operations of a municipality, including rural broadband, rural policing, and rural health. Municipalities have many responsibilities, and the Municipal Oversight Committee ensures they have a thumb on the pulse of the challenges that come with it.

When it comes to the success of any organization, relationship development should be at the forefront. SARM values the relationship with our provincial and territorial associations across the country, including our working relationship with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association (SUMA), which has improved vastly over the past few years as we continue to foster a good relationship while also understanding the differences between both organizations. SARM also has a valued and important relationship with the Rural Municipal Administrators Association (RMAA). SARM's president sits on their board as an Ex-officio member, and vice versa with their president. The RMAA serves as a sounding board for SARM's policies, while we do the same for theirs.





## SARM PROGRAMS



I will now pivot to highlight the many programs run by SARM, including SARM's insurance and benefits programs which are the best in the province. SARM began offering Fidelity Bonds to RMs in 1931. This paved the way for the other grass-roots insurance plans including property and liability self-insurance. SARM's benefit plans have been protecting municipal employees and elected officials with quality, affordable, coverage for over 50 years. These programs are a success thanks to the commitment of our membership, they provide superb coverage at affordable prices, which is the exact theory of a self-insurance program's ability to help its members.

SARM has been a long-time partner of both the provincial and federal governments on providing agriculture programs. Under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership agreement, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and SARM are delivering five programs that make up the Pest Biosecurity Program. Rural municipalities and First Nation communities in Saskatchewan will have resources when dealing with invasive plants, rats, nuisance beavers, gophers, clubroot, and other pests as declared or designated under *The Pest Control Act* and *The Weed Control Act* of Saskatchewan. Funded through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Plant Health Network is one of five pest biosecurity programs available to RMs and First Nations. The purpose of the Plant Health Network is to provide a network of field workers to facilitate early detection and rapid response for plant pests in Saskatchewan.

SARM also provides other services including legal and community planning. Legal services principally represent rural municipalities with respect to claims under the SARM Liability Self-Insurance Plan, as well as provide advice to the Board of Directors. Legal services also provide advice to RMs, including providing written opinions, drafting bylaws and agreements, as well as representing RMs in legal proceedings. SARM started offering community planning services in 2008, and as of 2020, over 80% of RMs have planning bylaws in effect. Community planning staff support municipalities in using their planning bylaws as well as inquiries they may have in the planning process.

SARM has a great team that cares and is all willing to learn from not only each other, but also our membership. The team believes in holding each other accountable, collaborating, and having the courage to change. Putting members first and prioritizing innovation is always at the forefront. The advocacy team is very strong. When I started my tenure with SARM,



**SARM IS the voice of rural Saskatchewan and has been the voice since 1905.** Also, SARM is mandated to advocate for the agriculture industry, and I believe we do a great job of this.

The message starts at the council table. We kindly ask that administrators place the SARM updates on the meeting agendas and that councils take a peek at our website as well as sign up for our communications, whether that is the Rural Councillor, Rural Sheaf, or Rural Dart. It's easy to do, just visit **SARM.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SARM-Publications.pdf** and when you do, all SARM information will come to your inbox. Please spread the word about what SARM stands for, and what we do together for rural Saskatchewan. We are all in this together and I am very proud to be part of it! Thanks for all you do.


**THANK YOU AND ENJOY THE SPRING!**

there was only one policy staff, which has now grown to four. This growth has paid off as we have the strongest federal and provincial advocacy I have seen since I was first elected. This team organized the entire Advocacy Days in Ottawa this past fall, with over 23 meetings that were very effective for our membership and their needs. It's still amazing to find out how many people in Ottawa recognize SARM and know what SARM stands for. Even as much as saying they would love to see more Saskatchewan advocacy like SARM's. The only unfortunate part is that they don't all agree with our policy perspectives, but we still can't give up trying to change people's minds by being positive and showing our way of solving problems.

If SARM has a fault, it's that we don't blow our own horn or celebrate the success we achieve together with our members. We've adopted a culture of being modest and positive rather than having our egos guide the way. Our stand is to only worry about what we are doing rather than focusing on others. The best way to do a job is to put your head down and get to work. Our team works!

If you wish to better understand some of SARM's successes, peek at the "SARM Annual Report" or even the many other documents which can be viewed at **SARM.ca/about/publications**, or found in each and every RM office in Saskatchewan.

I wish to ask you all a favour; we need help from you, our members, to spread the word about what SARM does for rural Saskatchewan and to spread the message that



**sama**  
SASKATCHEWAN ASSESSMENT  
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Timely delivery of maintenance was a major priority for the Agency in 2023, and SAMA delivered maintenance on time to 87% of our client municipalities. The Agency is now focused on 2024 maintenance and completing analysis for the 2025 Revaluation. SAMA will deliver preliminary values for the 2025 Revaluation to Government Relations by April 1, 2024 for provincial tax policy, and to our clients by June 30, 2024.

One of SAMA's major strategic objectives is to deliver on the promise of increasing property inspections. From 2018 to 2023 our goal was to complete 630,000 property reviews. The Agency surpassed that mark, with 634,900+ reviews, in what we see as a big success for our clients and stakeholders. Our goal for 2024 is to review/inspect 110,000 properties.

Thank you for your continued funding support, which has allowed SAMA to sustain our operations and implement and maintain new technologies to attain this major objective.

For more information visit our website at **www.sama.sk.ca**.

Contact SAMA by phone at: 1-800-667-7262,  
or by email: [info.request@sama.sk.ca](mailto:info.request@sama.sk.ca).



# LET'S TALK GROUP CHAT

BY JAY MEYER, SARM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE MOST  
IMPORTANT FACTOR  
WHEN WORKING  
IN TEAMS IS  
COMMUNICATION.

Effective communication builds trust, allows team members to know what is going on, improves engagement, develops innovation, as well as enhances transparency. Effective communication can create a productive and enjoyable workplace. For effective communication, it is important you include everyone who will be affected, because, if you do not, it can be counterproductive and divisive. There will always be a balancing act.

Over the past 20 years, communicating with each other has changed immensely. Not so long ago, communication either happened face-to-face or via telephone. Now it is very quick and easy to connect with friends, family, and businesses. There are ample ways for groups of colleagues to communicate together including group texts. An example would be using WhatsApp as a tool to connect to councils instantly. These apps are excellent ways to touch base,

although they can come with difficulties depending on the situation and conversation. With every convenience, comes challenges.

Many councils are taking the opportunity to use innovative tools to assist with communication. Group communication works well if you include all individuals on the team. Individuals must exercise caution when using these tools, such as having a plan of when to use them, and setting boundaries around what is discussed and how often. Group chats can very quickly turn into gossip networks, become very unproductive, misinterpreted, and cause more problems than you may already have. If you identify the main use of group chat is to gossip, please reconsider the purpose and leave the gossip for the coffee shop. It would be recommended that someone monitor the conversation, so if the group chat goes down a rabbit hole or crosses the line into conversations unrelated to your responsibilities, it can be called out. If the group chat becomes a debate, this could lead to significant infighting within the group, and you could see the creation of several smaller group chats in support of each side.

Group chats should also not be a replacement for an in-camera session. The public may perceive this to be the case. In-camera sessions are used when discussing highly sensitive or confidential matters that cannot be discussed in an open meeting. Like every tool, in-camera can be misused, so it is important you are careful when you move in-camera. To assist in effective communication, you should certainly involve your administration in all meetings in and out of camera unless the discussion is around the administration. If the administrator is not part of all conversations around the







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council table, it is nearly impossible for them to defend council decisions to the public. If you do not include your administrator in your discussions with council, it is critical you ask yourself why that is the case and are confident with the decision.

Be aware that group chats can quickly become overwhelming as messages may come day or night. It is important to disengage in anything you do, so a good rule would be to only submit group chat messages during certain times of the day. Limit the amount of time you spend on group chat as all participants may not be as engaged with their devices and end up entering the chat 150 messages in. It may become overwhelming, and some individuals may ignore the conversation while others assume you are paying attention.

You may encounter governance challenges with group chats. Although group chats can act as an excellent way to quickly communicate, it is important that all councillors and administrators are part of the group. Those who are not part of the group will feel ostracized, which can develop a division in council, and quickly break trust. It is critical to not just have a handful of people around the table privy to the discussions while leaving others waiting for the next email or council meeting to receive the same information. Group chats are also not meetings, they are conversations, and you can't make decisions outside of meetings. Be careful as the public and administration may perceive the council's group chat as a meeting with the goal of rubber-stamping the decision before a formal discussion at the next open council meeting.

Like any tools that council can use to assist with effective communication, there are good and bad. It's up to the user to decide what is best and weigh the pros and cons, and while doing so, monitor the effective use along the way. Innovation is key to success in any role, so use the technology you have at your fingertips, but don't abuse it. Set boundaries and discuss the risks. With change comes adversity, and with adversity comes growth; just make sure you are effectively communicating with each other along the way without leaving anyone out.

**MAKE SURE YOU ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH WHATEVER TOOL YOU USE WHILE BEING TRANSPARENT WHILE USING THEM. AND REMEMBER THAT IF YOU AREN'T CHANGING YOU AREN'T GROWING.**

# THE ECONOMY, INFLATION, AND HOW IT AFFECTS AGRICULTURE



**BY BILL HUBER,  
SARM VICE PRESIDENT**

Happy New Year to everyone!  
As we finish the first few months  
of 2024, I hope this year brings  
good health and good times.

Like every year, we are at the point  
when farmers and ranchers associated  
with the farm industry are getting their  
seeding plans in place, and the ranchers  
and livestock producers are busy

selecting new herd sires and finalizing  
their breeding plans for the year.

I can honestly say that as a young man  
growing up on the farm, I knew what I  
wanted to be when I finished my  
education. A farmer! That's right, that's  
the career I chose, and it's been pretty  
good for me and my family. But these  
days, I'm concerned about inflation and  
high interest rates for all those who farm  
for a living.

Since becoming involved in municipal  
politics in 2011 and being elected to the  
SARM Board in 2016, I have stepped  
back from the day-to-day management  
and responsibilities required to keep a  
mixed farming operation running  
smoothly and profitably. Although, I still  
have a keen interest and am very aware  
of how agriculture has changed and  
continues to change as we move forward.

Farm sizes have been continually  
increasing; what used to be an  
average-size farm of 1,500 acres is

now considered small. At a steady pace,  
farms have become 20,000 to 30,000  
acres with some larger operations  
exceeding 100,000. There are so many  
things that can affect our economy and  
the future of the average-sized farm in  
Saskatchewan.

I attended a farm-related industry  
meeting in Calgary last fall, and one of  
the guest speakers asked the crowd,  
"What does sustainability mean?" Good  
question. He received four completely  
different answers. The dictionary  
describes it as the ability for something  
to be maintained at a specific rate or  
level. In the broadest sense,  
sustainability refers to the ability to  
maintain or support a process  
continuously over time, and in business  
and policy contexts, sustainability seeks  
to prevent the depletion of natural or  
physical resources so that they will  
remain available for the long term.

Inflation over the last couple of years and  
rising interest rates are making it more



challenging to be profitable, especially for smaller or average-sized farms.

Two years ago, we saw commodity prices for canola, wheat, barley, and pulse crops rise to unseen levels. For example, canola was at \$25.00/bushel, hard red spring wheat at \$12.00/bushel, and malt barley at \$9.00/bushel, to mention a few. Need I say more, it didn't take long for input prices to follow suit. By the spring of 2022, nitrogen fertilizers had risen to \$2,250 - 2,300/tonne, and phosphorus hit highs of \$1,350.00/tonne.

As of June 1, 2022, it was documented that fuel costs had increased more than 80% since the first quarter of 2019, and feed costs had come very close to doubling, whereas some fertilizer types were even higher. Although they didn't reach the same highs, the machinery and pesticide costs also rose, leading to an overall farm input growth of 25%.

**SASKATCHEWAN FARMLAND VALUES CONTINUED TO SKYROCKET INTO 2023. THESE VALUES VARIED BY REGION - RANGING FROM \$2,200 TO 2,450/ACRE. THE HIGHEST SALE PRICES SEEN WERE AS MUCH AS \$4,500/ACRE IN THE WEST-CENTRAL REGION. IN THE SOUTH-EAST, PRICES INCREASED 6%, AVERAGING BETWEEN \$2,049/ACRE AND \$3,600/ACRE.**

Having said all that, in early 2024, commodity prices are moving downward faster than we had anticipated and fertilizer prices have come down somewhat, but machinery costs remain incredibly high, and I often think that they will remain where they are with little to no relief.

In closing, I leave you to ponder this, is there a long-term future in agriculture for the average-size operations? With inflation, costs, and interest rates being uncomfortably high, many farmers are facing some dreadful truths. Are we witnessing the extinction of the small average-sized farm?



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**BY MYRON KOPEC, SARM DIVISION 4 DIRECTOR**

As a producer and agricultural professional, I recognize the value of food security and consider it an honour to be a member of an industry collaborating to feed the world.

With Saskatchewan being the largest agriculture producer in the country, we must continue to advocate for policies and find solutions that encourage positive changes that allow both Saskatchewan and Canada to invest in food security.

In the fall of 2023, along with other SARM board members and staff, I was fortunate to travel to Ottawa to lobby the federal government with the concerns of rural Saskatchewan. We met with various representatives to discuss a wide range of issues and the negative impact that policies such as a reduction of fertilizer emissions, increase in carbon tax, PMRA Biosecurity Framework, and Bills C-235 and S-243 could have on the agricultural sector, food security, the economy, and society.

**THE POLICIES SARM LOBBIED**



**FEDERAL FERTILIZER**

The proposed federal fertilizer emission reduction strategy, which aims to cut emissions by 30% from 2020 levels by 2030, is problematic. Reduced fertilizer use will result in lower production and negative economic impacts. Reducing fertilizer use is contrary to the United Nation’s goal of eliminating world

*(continued on page 14)*





Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

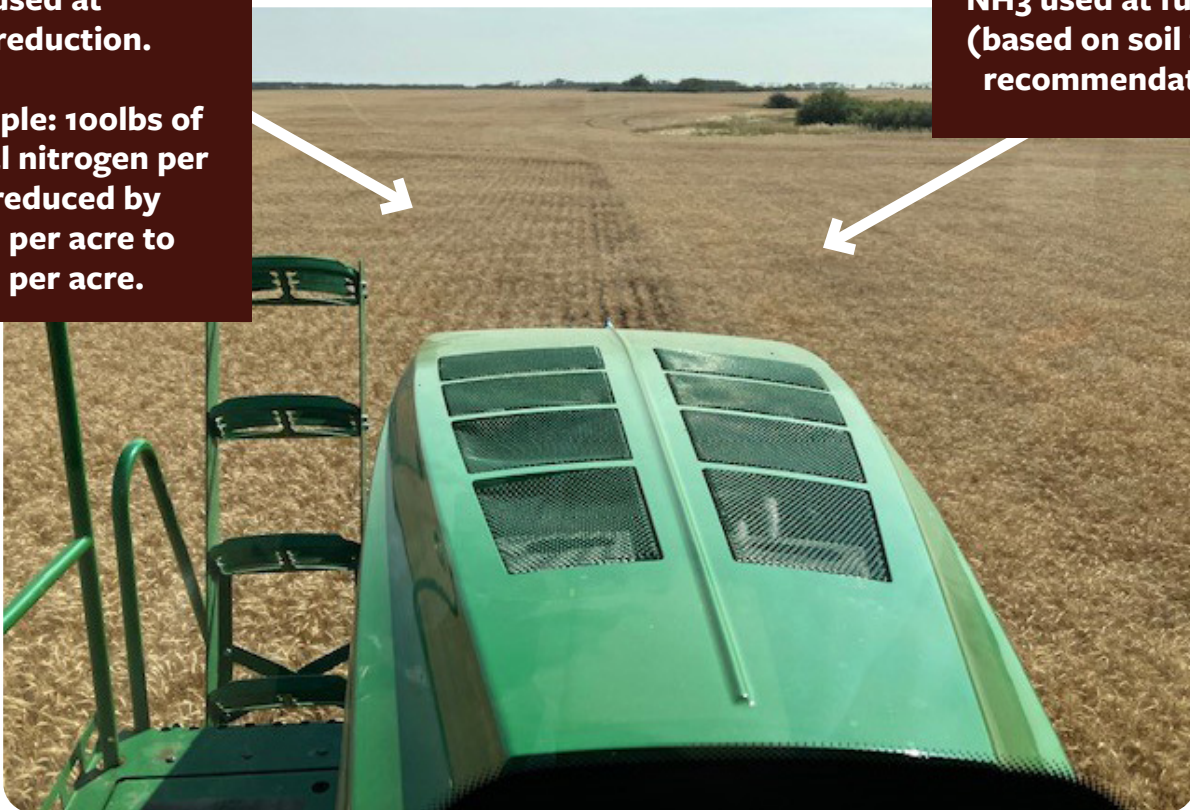
# Federal Fertilizer Emission Reduction Strategy

## Crop output using 40% less nitrogen fertilizer (NH<sub>3</sub> gas)

NH<sub>3</sub> used at 40% reduction.

Example: 100lbs of actual nitrogen per acre reduced by 40lbs per acre to 60lbs per acre.

NH<sub>3</sub> used at full rate (based on soil test recommendations)



**EXPECTED YIELD LOSS: minimum of 30% to 40%**

hunger by 2030. The federal government has set a target to increase Canadian agriculture exports by 55% by 2025, and this increase will not be attainable if nitrogen fertilizer use is reduced by 30%. The federal government must recognize and reward Saskatchewan producers for being among the most sustainable in the world and for the world-class agricultural and environmental practices they have already adopted.

## CARBON TAX

Canada is responsible for less than 1.5% of greenhouse gases globally. In 2022, China was the largest emitter of greenhouse gases accounting for 31% of global emissions.

Many of the countries accounting for the majority of global greenhouse emissions do not have a carbon tax. In Canada, the current carbon tax rate of \$65 per tonne is scheduled to increase to \$170 per tonne by 2030. This tax increases the price of all aspects of agriculture such as seed, crop protection technology, equipment, parts, fertilizer, transportation, and fuel, to mention a few. This will result in an increase in the cost of production, reduced profit margins, and ultimately reduced competitiveness of Saskatchewan producers.

## BILL C-235

Bill C-235 is an act respecting the building of a green economy in the prairies. In short, this policy is to transition industries, including agriculture, from fossil fuels to green energy. The agriculture industry is heavily dependent on fossil fuels, and it is impossible to transition to green technology because it isn't reliable or doesn't exist. An untimely forced transition will have a

significant negative impact on both food production, and the Canadian economy.

## BILL S-243

Bill S-243, the Climate-Aligned Finance Act, will force federal financial institutions and federally regulated entities to align their investment activities with Canada's climate commitments. This bill will force Canada's financial sector to consider climate risks as it aims to help Canada achieve the goals of the Paris Accord: net-zero emissions by 2050. It could possibly undermine free markets and have crippling consequences for not only financial institutions and the Canadian economy but all industries, including agriculture. Potentially, if your farm plan doesn't meet specific green parameters, you may not qualify for the financing your business requires.

## THE PEST MANAGEMENT REGULATORY AGENCY (PMRA)

The PMRA is responsible for pesticide regulation in Canada. The federal government is moving forward on commitments to strengthen the pesticide review process. The new biosecurity framework includes a focus on reducing the use and overall risk from pesticides by at least 50% by 2030. It is critical that the PMRA continues to use science-based evidence to register pesticides. Any potential loss of important products like glyphosate would have detrimental impacts on agriculture practices like zero-till and all the related soil health and erosion benefits, global competitiveness, and production.



**CANADA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LESS THAN 1.5% OF GREENHOUSE GASES GLOBALLY. IN 2022, CHINA WAS THE LARGEST EMITTER OF GREENHOUSE GASES ACCOUNTING FOR 31% OF GLOBAL EMISSIONS.**





## GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

With the current global population just past 8 billion (it is predicted to reach 10 billion by 2050), the demand for food will continue to increase. Canada, now the fifth largest global exporter of agri-food products, has built a strong global reputation as a provider of abundant high-quality, safe, affordable food. Our ability to help feed the world contributes to global food security. As the global population continues to

increase, Canada is uniquely positioned and has numerous advantages as a global leader in food production.

Canada has a small population coupled with a large, arable land base, making Saskatchewan critical to the increased food production strategy and food security as our province is the largest agriculture producer in the country with 40% of the arable land.

Food insecurity has profound implications, such as undernourishment and famine, premature mortality, food inflation, civil unrest, and environmental

issues (i.e., soil erosion and water pollution), to mention a few.

While in Ottawa, SARM met with government ministers, MPs, senators, and other government officials. This led to excellent discussions, and we informed them of SARM's concerns regarding the impact these policies will have on the economy in rural Saskatchewan, food production, and, ultimately, food security.





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# RMAA MESSAGE

BY CAROL BELLEFEUILLE  
DIVISION 2 RMAA DIRECTOR

New to the RMAA Board of Directors in May of 2023. It has been a definite learning experience as to what goes on behind the scenes of the RMAA.

Many different topics are discussed, but the one that I think is very important to the rural communities today is the recruitment and training of administrators and Council members for these rural offices, and the ongoing, and new opportunities being made available.

The rural lifestyle is the most sought after today. In today's world it is harder to maintain these sought after and cherished life conditions, and we must hold on to the rural lifestyle. One of these ways is to preserve the way things are governed on a local level. If we do not participate in this process, it will erode slowly into other governing bodies which could take away the rural lifestyle we have known to love and appreciate for what it is.

Participation in governance has a way of resonating our thoughts and values into policy and the way we see our lives and for future generations to come. Preserving this life comes with participation in what aspects of our lives we wish to protect. Councils and Council meetings are not the most interesting things in life, but they are part of a process which will maintain the way we do things to govern our lives. Preserving the values we cherish is most important during turbulent times.

Training is another important element to success. The process of providing learning opportunities to enhance

knowledge, skills and attitudes are invaluable. This training can give the capabilities to perform duties effectively and efficiently, such as relevant policies, regulations, and standards that govern their work.

Policy and planning are also key. Rural Municipal Administration and Councilors governance are essential for ensuring the well-being and development of rural communities to pave the way for the next generation.

A positive change can drive individual behaviors such as pursuing goals, inspiring, motivating, and creating a shared vision and direction for personal and rural development. This can help to overcome obstacles and to plan what is best for the rural lifestyle, and the rural community.

Being a rural municipal administrator can be a rewarding career that offers a chance to make a real difference in your community. Administrators are the main point of contact between

ratepayers, councils, and governments. Rural municipal administrators are very important to keeping these municipalities moving forward in these ever-changing times.

It's great to hear that Rural Municipalities in Saskatchewan are taking the steps for Administrators succession and retention. Training and mentoring programs will have a positive influence on the development of these individuals and can help them to better serve their communities.

**ENCOURAGING OUR  
YOUNG PEOPLE TO  
PARTICIPATE IN  
MUNICIPAL POLITICS  
AND MUNICIPAL  
GOVERNMENT WILL  
HELP TO SHAPE THE  
FUTURE FOR THE NEXT  
GENERATION LIVING IN  
RURAL SASKATCHEWAN.**





# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

BY THE HONOURABLE DAVID MARIT,  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I commend our producers for their hard work and tireless contributions as they get through calving season and prepare for the 2024 growing season.

With a dry year in 2023 and lower than normal snow falls through the winter, we know there might be challenges in the months ahead. However, as a sector, we have proven to be resilient. Through dialogue, collaboration, feedback, and learning from the experience of past years, we move forward to adopt best practices and face challenges, such as drought, head on. Feedback from organizations like SARM helps inform government actions and programs to ensure they meet the needs of the sector.

As we work to mitigate the various challenges facing the sector, producers' primary line of defence is provided by our Business Risk Management Programs: AgriInvest, AgriStability and AgriInsurance (Crop Insurance). Producers are encouraged to participate in these programs to help manage risk. This past year, the 2023 Canada-Saskatchewan Feed Program was made available through AgriRecovery to compensate extraordinary costs of feeding livestock, providing financial relief for livestock producers facing challenges due to drought. Applications to the program recently closed.



The Ministry of Agriculture, in partnership with the federal government, also has a strong suite of programs available through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership to support producers. Our programs help operations increase resiliency in challenging years. Popular mitigation programs include the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program to support sustainable water infrastructure, the Resilient Agricultural Landscapes Program to support environmental best management practices on farm and the Irrigation Development Program to support the installation of irrigation infrastructure to create a secure water supply and increase irrigation capacity, with up to \$500,000 for the development of new irrigation acres. In partnership with SARM, producers can also access the Pest Biosecurity Program, including a new gopher control program.

Producers are also encouraged to reach out to their local specialists at any of the Ministry of Agriculture regional offices across Saskatchewan for information on alternative feeding strategies, assistance with water testing or programs that might work for your operation.

Looking ahead to 2024, the ministry will continue to work to advance key issues, and collaborate with organizations like SARM.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WORK IS IMPORTANT, BUT YOUR PHYSICAL MENTAL HEALTH IS EVEN MORE SO. THE FARM STRESS LINE AT 1-800-667-4442 IS A CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE AVAILABLE 24-7.**





# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

BY THE HONOURABLE GENE MAKOWSKY,  
MINISTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## I ALWAYS APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH SARM MEMBERSHIP.

Rural council members play an important role as representatives by listening to fellow residents and working with elected officials to meet the challenges and opportunities affecting our communities.

The Ministry of Social Services is taking currently taking significant steps forward on initiatives that include the recently announced provincial approach to homelessness, affordability for low-income families and implementation of the new *Accessible Saskatchewan Act*.

In recent years, we have all seen addictions, mental health concerns, and homelessness on the rise in communities across Canada. Our government has been working alongside municipalities and community partners to build a coordinated approach to address these issues. In October, we announced a new provincial approach to homelessness to enhance supports and protect people and public safety.

The \$40.2 million investment in new funding over the next two years will create 155 new supportive housing spaces, 120 new permanent emergency shelter spaces, along with enhanced community safety, and outreach responses that include 30 new complex needs emergency shelter spaces.

Since the initial announcement was made, a new emergency shelter providing up

to 20 shelter spaces opened in Meadow Lake, 45 new permanent enhanced emergency shelter spaces opened in Prince Albert, and 55 supportive housing units opened in Saskatoon. Together with our Indigenous partners, municipalities, community-based organizations and other ministries, work continues to develop additional services for those who need more than a home to stay connected to housing. This approach provides targeted support in appropriate settings that are aligned with the needs of the individual.

Another key priority for our government is affordability. In October, we announced the new Saskatchewan Employment Incentive program that will make life more affordable for low-income families.

The Saskatchewan Employment Incentive, which launched earlier this year, provides a monthly financial incentive that supports working families with the costs of being at work, like transportation and childcare. It is available to parents leaving income assistance programs for employment and will also assist others to remain in the workforce.

On December 3, 2023, *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* and regulations came into force. This legislation will create a more inclusive and accessible province by helping to identify, prevent, and remove accessibility barriers for people with disabilities.

We are starting this work by establishing an Accessibility Advisory Committee that will have a balance of experiences and perspectives from people with

disabilities and from organizations who represent and support them. Some examples of the areas the committee will advise on are the built environment, information and communications, employment, transportation, procurement, and service delivery.

Additionally, government is taking the lead by developing its accessibility plan that will be publicly posted on December 3, 2024. We will need everyone's insight to make sure we get this right, and there will be many public engagement opportunities along the way.

I look forward to our future work together as we create a more inclusive province where everyone can fully participate in our communities.

Our government's goal is to continue building a strong economy, stronger communities, and stronger families. I thank all members of SARM for your ongoing dedication to your communities, your contributions play an important role in this growth and building a strong Saskatchewan.



# SASKPOWER ENCOURAGES POWER LINE SAFETY THIS SPRING

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF CROWN INVESTMENTS

As temperatures begin to warm up, SaskPower would like to take a moment to remind everyone working in the fields this spring of some important safety considerations when working around power infrastructure. SaskPower wants everyone to be able to come home to their families and friends safe every day, and keeping these tips in mind will help make that happen.

SaskPower often sees a spike in line contacts involving farm equipment and

other large machinery in the spring, and again in the fall. Knowing how to both prevent these line contacts and what to do should in the event of an incident are critical.



## PREVENTING CONTACT WITH POWER LINES

When working around power lines in any season, always be aware of your surroundings and plan your work in advance. Preparation is key to safely working around power lines. Plan your route ahead of time and note the location of all power lines in the area.

Keep yourself and any tools or equipment you're using at a safe distance from power lines. SaskPower recommends minimum safe distances of at least 20 feet.

If you're able, use a spotter on the ground when moving large equipment to provide an extra set of eyes - having that additional perspective is extremely useful in avoiding accidental contact.

**And if you'll be doing any excavation work, always contact Sask 1st Call (1-866-828-4888) before you dig.**

**For more information, please visit Preventing Contact with Power Lines ([saskpower.com](http://saskpower.com)).**





If you need to exit the vehicle due to a fire, here's how to do it safely:

- Make sure no wires or cables are in your way.
- Swing open the door as wide as possible making sure to not touch the outside of the vehicle.
- Stand in the doorway, cross your arms, and put your feet together.
- Jump as far as possible, and land with your feet together.
- Do not touch the vehicle.
- Keep your arms crossed and feet together and hop at least 10 metres to safety.
- Under no circumstances should you return to your vehicle.

**For more information, please visit Construction and Farm Safety (saskpower.com).**

- Stay back at least 10 metres (33 feet), or about the length of a bus.
- Keep others in the immediate area away from the downed line.
- Call SaskPower immediately at 310-2220 or call 911 in the event of an emergency.

## TREES AND POWER LINE SAFETY

We all love trees - but trees growing under or near power lines are a safety hazard that can result in arcing, fires, or even the surrounding ground to become electrified. Trees contacting power lines also cause approximately 1,700 power outages per year, impacting thousands of customers.

If a tree or branch is touching a power line and the line is sparking (or the branch is smoking), call SaskPower immediately at 310-2220 and keep back a safe distance.

For your safety, never attempt to trim or remove a tree that's near or touching a power line. Instead, contact SaskPower and submit a request to have the situation assessed. If the tree represents a threat to public safety or power infrastructure, SaskPower will trim or remove the tree if required. A request can be submitted on saskpower.com.

**It's also important to make sure trees and shrubs don't interfere with power lines once they've been planted. SaskPower has 'planting zones' for planting around power lines, what types of trees are appropriate for different zones and more on its website.**

## DOWNED POWER LINES

Winter isn't the only season with powerful storms and extreme weather. Spring storms, high winds, wet snow or sleet, and ice (or frost) buildup can result in downed power lines. If you spot a downed power line, always assume it's electrified - even if it's not sparking or making a sound - and follow these steps:



## IF YOU CONTACT A POWER LINE

Almost half of all power line contacts involve large equipment such as construction or agriculture equipment. The risk of a power line contact is increased when surfaces are slippery and/or visibility is reduced. Since March 2023, there have been over 250 such incidents, and we need to work together to bring those numbers down.

**If you contact a power line, do not get out of your vehicle unless it's on fire. Call SaskPower immediately at 310-2220 or call 911 if it's an emergency.**

 **SaskPower**  
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## ROAD MAINTENANCE EQUALS ROAD SAFETY IN RURAL MUNICIPALITIES:

# ENSURING SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS



With winter in the rear-view mirror, it is time to start repairing the damage to your roadways that comes from the winter and early spring thawing conditions. Road maintenance plays a crucial role in ensuring safe and efficient transportation networks in rural municipalities. With vast stretches of roads and limited resources, rural municipalities face unique challenges when it comes to maintaining their road infrastructure. This article aims to highlight the importance of road maintenance in rural municipalities and provide practical tips and strategies to enhance safety measures.

### 1. UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES:

Rural municipalities have limited budgets and resources for road maintenance, making it essential to prioritize road safety measures. Some of the key challenges faced by rural areas include:

- Limited manpower and equipment
- Long distances and remote locations
- Harsh weather conditions
- Heavy agricultural and industrial traffic

### 2. DEVELOPING A ROAD MAINTENANCE SAFETY PLAN:

To ensure safe road conditions, rural municipalities should develop a comprehensive road maintenance safety plan. This plan should include:

- Regular inspections and assessments of road conditions, including documenting same.
- Prioritization of maintenance activities based on safety risks
- Clear guidelines for road repair and maintenance procedures
- Records of all maintenance activities including date, location and what was completed

### 3. IMPLEMENTING ROAD SAFETY MEASURES:

#### a. Signage and Markings:

- Clear and visible signage to indicate road conditions, hazards, and speed limits
- Reflective markings and road signs for improved visibility, especially during nighttime or adverse weather conditions
- Ensuring you have a 'sign map' and repair those signs that were damaged during the winter months from snow removal activities



**b. Maintenance of Road Surfaces:**

- Regular inspection and repair of heaves, cracks, and other road surface defects
- Prompt removal of debris, fallen trees, turned up stones from grading activities, and other obstacles from roadways
- Grading and leveling of gravel roads to minimize dust and improve traction

**c. Bridge and Culvert Safety:**

- Regular inspections and maintenance of bridges and culverts to ensure structural integrity
- Clear signage and weight restrictions for bridges to prevent overloading and accidents

**ROAD MAINTENANCE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE IN RURAL MUNICIPALITIES TO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF RESIDENTS AND THE SMOOTH FUNCTIONING OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS.**

**4. TRAINING AND EDUCATION:**

- Providing training and education programs for road maintenance personnel on road safety protocols and best practices
- Conducting public awareness campaigns to educate residents on safe driving practices and the importance of road safety and advising via newsletters or social media of areas of concern

**5. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:**

- Collaborating with neighboring municipalities, provincial authorities, and industry stakeholders to share resources, knowledge, and best practices
- Seeking funding opportunities and grants to support road maintenance and road safety initiatives, SGI is a great source of this type of funding

**CONCLUSION:**

Road maintenance is of paramount importance in rural municipalities to ensure the well-being of residents and the smooth functioning of transportation networks. By understanding the unique challenges faced by rural areas and implementing proactive road safety measures, rural municipalities can create safer roads and enhance the overall quality of life for their communities. Through collaboration, education, and strategic planning, rural municipalities can move their communities forward with safe, well maintained transportation networks into the future.







# WARFARIN: A RODENTICIDE MAKING A COMEBACK



**Rodenticides are used as a tool in many rodent management programs, offering an economical and safe alternative to address rodent infestations as part of an integrated pest management strategy.**

Many rodenticides use an anticoagulant which is a slow-acting blood thinner. Today, the use of certain rodenticides, particularly “second-generation” anticoagulants (SGARs), are becoming a Canada-wide issue as some provinces and municipalities have imposed use restrictions aimed at reducing non-target exposure. SGARs can pose a risk to people, pets, and wildlife through direct and secondary poisoning and the risk of secondary poisoning by second-generation rodenticides is higher than first-generation rodenticides. For example, the British Columbia Government, introduced a law around SGAR use to reduce the risk of wildlife poisoning by introducing new requirements for the sale and use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides as of January 21, 2023. Additionally, to protect the health of

the population and preserve the environment and biodiversity, the City of Montreal in Quebec, regulated the sale and use of pesticides as of January 1, 2022 where 35 molecules used in pesticides were banned; among those are some SGARs.

These restrictions and use requirements come at a time when pest professionals are seeking more rodenticide options, not less. Therefore, it may be time to consider increasing the use of warfarin bait. **Warfarin** is a “first generation” rodenticide and has some real benefits.

Warfarin revolutionized the rodent control business when it was first implemented as a rodenticide as it was safe and effective compared to earlier rodenticides and came to be used widely in many applications. Rodents had to feed on warfarin baits several times over several days to have effectiveness and the slow action prevented bait-shyness from developing; rodents didn’t associate the gradually developing sickness with the bait and would return to feed several times over several days.

Warfarin is ranked among the safest rodenticides by the EPA and Health Canada. Professor Rex Marsh (Professor Emeritus at the University of California-Davis) notes that “Warfarin has the greatest non-target safety margin of all currently used anticoagulant baits, [and] efficacy is only marginally sacrificed for safety. Warfarin may be preferred where safety to non-targets is a greater concern than resistance.”

In the interest of the Rural Municipalities (RMs) and the options for rodent control in Saskatchewan, SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) has a registered Warfarin product with Health Canada since 1977. **The product S.A.R.M Mouse & Rat Bait Warfarin with Rolled Oats (REGISTRATION No. 14640 PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT)** is still in the market and is currently being manufactured on-behalf of SARM by Ecopest Inc. The product is safely manufactured and can be circulated cost-effectively to all RM’s.

**Article Contribution: Ecopest Inc.  
Amin Poonja and Sameer Thawer**

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## A CONVERSATION WITH A WEED INSPECTOR

# THREE THINGS A WEED INSPECTOR WANTS YOU TO KNOW

## INVASIVE WEEDS, THE WEED CONTROL ACT AND WEED INSPECTORS

Invasive weeds are unwanted plants that are not native to a particular environment. Some of them have served as ornamental or medicinal plants in the past or present.

Invasive weeds can pose a threat to livestock and humans, e.g., leafy spurge and wild parsnip. It can cause reduced yield or unproductivity in crop and pasture lands, e.g., scentless chamomile and absinthe. Additionally, there can be negative environmental impacts like blockage of waterways and a decrease in desirable habitats, e.g., purple loosestrife.

*The Saskatchewan Weed Control Act (WCA) guides the management of these weeds in the province, defining the responsibilities of officials, owners/occupants, rural municipalities (RMs) and so on. Invasive weeds of concern to the province can be designated as prohibited (rare or absent), noxious (established and spreading) or nuisance weeds (widespread). Weed inspectors can be appointed by RMs every year to serve as enforcement agents of this Act and its Regulations. Weed inspectors are boots on the ground in RMs that follow the principle of early detection and rapid response (EDRR) to invasive weeds. Given the important role weed inspectors play in the management of invasive*



**BY TAYO ADEGEYE AAG, P.BIOL.  
WITH GERALD FLAMAN  
PLANT HEALTH OFFICER, SARM DIVISION 1  
WEED INSPECTOR AND FARMER, SE SK**



weeds, it was a pleasure to have a conversation with Gerald Flaman about the role and what he would like you the readers, to know. Gerald lives in Wapella, Saskatchewan and has been farming since 1966. He is a weed inspector with 18 years of experience in Saskatchewan.

## NOTES FROM THE CONVERSATION

Before becoming a weed inspector, Gerald was one of the leaders in a forage grain club for a few years. He got quite interested in learning about weeds in the area, how these weeds could affect crops, and how to combat them. He became a weed inspector in 2006 when he started making inquiries about a prohibited weed called Hound's Tongue that showed up in his RM; and the rest, they say, is history. Over the years, Gerald has been appointed by 5 RMs and is currently the weed inspector of 3 RMs in southeast Saskatchewan. The most interesting aspect of this job for Gerald is that certain weather conditions bring different weeds. Seeds of invasive weeds can lay dormant in the ground for years and when conditions are right, they grow and can spread.

## THREE THINGS A WEED INSPECTOR WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW

**1** When prohibited and noxious weeds show up, it is best to eradicate them immediately before the weeds grow, establish and become difficult to manage. This is especially the case for invasive weeds with rhizomes—underground horizontal stems that generate new shoots and roots like leafy spurge and common tansy.

**2** It is a good idea for ratepayers to learn more about identifying invasive weeds so more people can notify their RM office and the appointed weed inspector.

**3** Individuals need to be more aware of the rising costs associated with managing the spread of invasive weeds, which include, for instance, the cost of purchasing herbicides and spraying.

Gerald advises that new weed inspectors or people interested in becoming weed inspectors should attend useful workshops and webinars like the ones facilitated by SARM Plant Health Technical Advisors (PHTAs), and communicate with other weed inspectors and spray companies.

## FOLLOWING FROM THE CONVERSATION

Through the Sustainable CAP Pest Biosecurity Program, RMs, ratepayers, and First Nation communities can make use of the Invasive Plant Control Program (IPCP). This provides up to 50% rebate on the cost of pre-approved herbicides used in controlling select noxious weeds and up to 50% rebate on pre-approved herbicide costs and application for prohibited weeds. Weed Inspector expenses for monitoring and training are also covered up to 50%.

The best way to tackle invasive weeds is through an integrated management approach which employs a combination of strategies to effectively control and mitigate their impact. This holistic method typically includes prevention measures to limit the introduction of invasive species, early detection and rapid response to address new infestations promptly, and a range of



*Hound's tongue, showing leaf damage from the biocontrol agent, Mogulones crucifer. The weevil is said to be as effective as herbicides in controlling the weed which can save on costs.*

control methods such as herbicide application, manual removal, biological control, the use of competitive forage crops or restoring native vegetation.

SARM PHTAs regularly organize in-person workshops, webinars and in-field training for appointed officials and other interested persons. Information about this is usually shared with RM Administrators, appointed officials, in publications like the Rural Sheaf and social media. We

also have valuable recorded webinar videos spanning more than four years on various topics. You can access that here- <https://sarm.ca/programs/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership/invasive-plant-control-program/>



I want to thank Gerald Flaman for taking the time out to have a conversation on this important role. For more information or assistance please reach out to your PHTAs at <https://sarm.ca/programs/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership/plant-health-network/>.



# MLDP'S STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?



**BY MARY-LYNN CHARLTON, PRESIDENT, MARTIN CHARLTON COMMUNICATIONS**

For five years, Martin Charlton Communications (MCC) has been part of the Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP) offering our Strategic Communications for Municipalities workshop.

This workshop teaches how to effectively communicate with ratepayers as well as the media. We cover how to be proactive, rather than reactive, in communications with special tips on public speaking and techniques for social, on-line, print, radio, television and other media.

### **Why should municipalities worry about improving communications?**

1. Communications improves the effectiveness of municipal government by strengthening the relationship between citizens and their local governments.
2. Municipalities often do general communications well (advertising meetings, promoting events etc.) but generally don't do a good job telling ratepayers why you made your decisions and what they mean.

Clearly telling citizens what you're doing and why, and what it means for the average resident, boosts the confidence ratepayers have in council's decision-making.

Much of the content we offer in our workshops comes from over 30-years of experience as the largest communications and public relations company in Saskatchewan helping countless clients, including rural and urban municipalities, navigate communications and public relations challenges.

But we have also learned from our workshop participants - one of the best parts of our sessions is when participants share what works (or doesn't work) for them. We then share these best practices in subsequent workshops. So, you not only learn from us, but you learn from each other.

**HERE'S A FEW TOPICS WE COVER IN OUR MLDP SESSIONS:**

**1.** Municipalities and social media. Should we be on social media, what do we post and how often? How can we do social media without wasting precious staff time? What to do about incorrect information on social media?

**2.** Communicating a common message, and council speaking with one voice. What to do when a council member disagrees with council decisions and vents frustrations on social media or at the coffee shop, creating turmoil among ratepayers?

**3.** Transparency and full disclosure. We begin MLDP workshops by highlighting the *Municipalities Code of Ethics and Oath of Office* that says "Members of council shall endeavour to conduct and convey council business and all their duties in an open and transparent manner... so stakeholders can view the process and rationale used to reach decisions and the reasons for taking certain actions."

We share tips and techniques for demonstrating transparency which

boosts your credibility. The more citizens know about municipal decision-making, and how their priorities are being acknowledged and addressed, the more confidence they have in how you're spending tax dollars.

Educating ratepayers about decisions develops a positive reputation for the municipality and builds community support for the work council strives to get done.

**4.** How do I communicate? We discuss when and how to communicate with a website, social media, printed publications, e-newsletters, face-to-face meetings, automated phone and text messages, etc. We also cover general public speaking tips and how to prepare for interviews by journalists and/or bloggers.

**5.** Navigating challenges. Every municipality will encounter problems - emergencies such as fires or a train derailment, conflict that attracts public attention, public debates on contentious issues, etc. When problems arise, clear and effective communications is essential. We discuss strategies, tools and tactics to ensure your side of every story is heard.

**About Martin Charlton Communications**

*Martin Charlton Communications is Saskatchewan's largest communications and public relations company and one of the largest in western Canada.*

*We help our clients build bridges to stakeholders, the public, media and other key opinion leaders.*

*We work with local, provincial, national and international clients in need of public, government and media relations, and general communications and public relations expertise. These clients include rural and urban municipalities, large and small businesses, industry associations, governments, non-profit organizations and others.*

*At Martin Charlton Communications, we encourage clients to tell their stories - by sharing who you are, what you do, why you do it and how that matters helps others understand and appreciate your municipality, its leadership and its employees.*

*Need communications help? Call (306) 584-1000 or email [hell0@martincharlton.ca](mailto:hell0@martincharlton.ca).*



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# RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HEALTH – STRONGER TOGETHER

Those who work in agriculture face unique health challenges.

There are potential major injuries due to working with and around large equipment and animals, plus long-term exposures that can affect breathing, hearing, and movement. Rural and agricultural people face additional challenges due to distance and reduced access to needed healthcare.

The University of Saskatchewan’s *Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health* focuses on the needs of those living and working rural. Rural health deserves equal excellence through research, advocacy, knowledge, and outreach.

In 2023, the Centre - originally named the Centre for Agricultural Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan and

previously the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture - became the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health.

The Centre held an Open House at the University of Saskatchewan in September 2023 to celebrate the name change. Partners and supporters from industry, government, SARM, farmers, and the university toured through the Centre. Researchers and program leads were on hand to explain the different ways the Centre works to understand and improve health outcomes for rural and agricultural people.

SARM president Ray Orb was interviewed by the Centre for a feature highlights video, released for the open house. Orb said, rural life has specific challenges, but added: “we’ve had someone watching our back, and over the years, that’s been the Centre.”

Orb explained that the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health is unique in the way it fosters so much interaction and direct contact between researchers and rural people. That makes the research relevant and useful.

The Centre is also unique in that it’s more than research. It works to put boots on the ground with partnerships, outreach, and service. SARM’s rich history of advocating for the health and safety of rural people and agricultural producers makes it a perfect partner for the Centre.

One of the Centre’s flagship programs is the Agricultural Health and Safety Network (AHSN). The Network is a partnership between roughly 200 Saskatchewan RMs, the provincial government, SARM, and the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health.

**Photo captions top to bottom, left to right:** Centre open house Sept 2023; Shelly Sander, Discovery Days, Biggar 2023; Kendra Ulmer, breathing clinic, RM Loon Lake; AHSN booth; Kendra Ulmer, hearing clinic, RM Coteau.

The agricultural, industrial, and safety sectors, including industry, finance, transportation, commissions and associations, crown corporations, and non-profit organizations, have all provided strong connections, partnerships, and support for the Centre and various Network programs and initiatives through the years.

Kendra Ulmer, Manager of the Agricultural Health and Safety Network, says that these partnerships are the key to increased rural and agricultural health and safety.

The ongoing connection and communication between the Centre, industry, organizations, and communities showcases the strength and importance of the work, Orb adds. The Centre and its programs, such as the Network, work at the level where producers can relate to and understand the messages and information on rural and agricultural health and safety.

RMs who are members of the Agricultural Health and Safety Network pay a nominal yearly fee. Membership benefits include access to critical resources and outreach programs. Every farm household in every Network member RM receives a mailout package twice a year, with the Network News newsletter and additional health and safety resources. Member RMs can also request free One2One hearing or breathing clinics right in their home communities.

A popular program for member RMs is Discovery Days, a school-based farm safety program for students in grades 4-6. Schools located within member RMs can coordinate a Discovery Day visit. Students are guided through fun and interactive farm health and safety activities. These activities can include issues such as identifying hazards around a farm, machinery safety, animal safety, chemical safety, and grain safety. Since it began, Discovery Days have reached over 8,000 students in 195 schools across Saskatchewan.

**IF YOUR RM WOULD BE INTERESTED  
IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT NETWORK  
MEMBERSHIP PLEASE CONTACT US  
AT 306-966-6644**

The Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health's Agricultural Health & Safety Network can also be found at ag tradeshow throughout the year, including SARM's annual general meeting. Watch for the booth and stop by for a visit, pick up some resources, or ask us to visit your RM council to discuss benefits of membership in the Network. **You can also visit our website (<https://cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/>), reach out to us by phone (306-966-6644), or by email ([ruralaghealth@usask.ca](mailto:ruralaghealth@usask.ca)).**

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# NAVIGATING THE SILENT STORM: MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN AGRICULTURE

The picturesque scenes of sprawling fields and grazing cattle, emblematic of agriculture, often hide a sobering reality. Farmers and ranchers, our producers, face a series of challenges that lurk beneath the surface. In Canada, studies have shown that these very producers are especially susceptible to mental health challenges like depression and anxiety (Jones-Bitton et al., 2020).

## SO, WHAT CASTS SUCH A SHADOW OVER OUR AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY?

- **Financial Pressure:** The unpredictability of nature, combined with the looming debts of expensive land, equipment, and inputs, create a cocktail of financial uncertainties.
- **Limited Access to Help:** Those in rural regions often find mental health resources scarce. Compounding this issue, over half of Canada’s producers don’t enjoy reliable high-speed internet access, making virtual services an unreliable lifeline (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 2019).
- **Isolation:** The vast expanses that define farming landscapes can also be a breeding ground for feelings of isolation and seclusion.



- **Blurred Work-Life Balance:** For many, the farm is both a place of work and a home, leading to a never-ending cycle of responsibilities.
- **Easy Access to Firearms:** Many in the agricultural community have easy access to firearms, which, during moments of severe distress, can be lethal (Arnautovska et al., 2014; Jones-Bitton et al., 2020).



## FACING THESE CHALLENGES, HOW CAN WE BOLSTER OUR COMMUNITY AGAINST SUCH OVERWHELMING ODDS?

**Building resilience is key.** This includes nurturing strong relationships, ensuring financial stability, providing access to confidential mental health care, and promoting open conversations about emotions and well-being (Houle et al., 2008; American Psychological Association, 2005). Safe storage practices for firearms are also crucial.

It's essential to be aware of warning signs. Sudden behavioral changes, withdrawal from social circles, or vocalizing feelings of hopelessness warrant our attention. In these situations, a simple, "Is everything okay?" can be the first step in providing support. If you suspect someone may be contemplating suicide, asking them directly, ensuring they get professional help can be life-saving.

On a broader scale, communities can enhance awareness of mental health



resources, formulate farmer-specific support programs, and equip healthcare professionals to detect early signs of distress.

For our farmers, prioritize relationships, be open about your feelings, find moments to relax, and always seek help when necessary. Vulnerability isn't a weakness; it's a sign of strength, and an entire community is here to support you.

Let's deepen our conversations, reaching beyond the standard "How are you?" to the more probing "How are you really doing?" No one should ever feel they're walking this path alone.

# The Do More Agriculture Foundation

### Resources:

Arnautovska, U., McPhedran, S., & De Leo, D. (2014). A regional approach to understanding farmer suicide rates in Queensland. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 49(4), 593-599. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-013-0777-9>


Houle, J., Mishara, B. L., & Chagnon, F. (2008). An empirical test of a mediation model of the impact of the traditional male gender role on suicidal behavior in men. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 107(1-3), 37-43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2007.07.016>

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. (2019). *High-speed access for all: Canada's connectivity strategy*. [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/139.nsf/eng/h\\_00002.html#c](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/139.nsf/eng/h_00002.html#c)

Jones-Bitton, A., Best, C., MacTavish, J., Fleming, S., & Hoy, S. (2020). Stress, anxiety, depression, and resilience in Canadian farmers. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 55(2), 229-236. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-019-01738-2>

Jones-Bitton, A. (n.d.). Submission to the standing committee on agriculture and agri-food: Strengthening Canada's agriculture sector – A Canadian network for farmer mental health. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/AGRI/Brief/BR10199410/br-external/UniversityOfGuelph-e.pdf>





# WHAT IS "CLIMATE RESILIENCE?" WHY DOES IT MATTER? WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN SASKATCHEWAN?

Everywhere you look these days, you see the phrases such as "climate resilience" and "climate adaptation." But what does it mean to be resilient, to adapt to the climate? Isn't this something we've always done in Saskatchewan? Do we have any choice? Have we ever had any choice?

The Government of Saskatchewan released its Climate Resilience Measurement Framework in 2018 as part of its Prairie Resilience climate change strategy. They define resilience as *"the ability of a system, such as a community, ecosystem, or province, to cope with, adapt to and recover from stress or change while continuing to grow."* The framework is a collaboration across 14 ministry branches and

agencies, tracking progress on 25 measures across five areas of focus, such as natural systems, physical infrastructure, economic sustainability, community preparedness, and human well-being. Obviously, they are taking the impacts of climate in Saskatchewan very seriously, and they've provided many guides and resources on their Climate Resilience in Saskatchewan website.

Of course, if you grew up in any part of the province or have lived here for very long, you know we've always had to be resilient to the climate in Saskatchewan. And no, we haven't had a choice, except maybe to move elsewhere. And "elsewhere," they are dealing with different climate issues than we do, but

they still deal with them. So, given that we live here, and here most of us want to and are likely to stay, let's explore it means to be climate resilient in Saskatchewan.

You've heard it said, I'm sure, that it is municipalities who bear the brunt of extreme climate events and their impact on our infrastructure. It can be hard to plan ahead for the weather, which hits us with what it wants, when it wants, with total disregard for whether we are ready for it or not.

What sort of snowfalls and storms will winter bring? Will we have heavy rains and severe flooding in the spring? Will we have a fast melt that overruns our culverts and roadways? Will there be a





drought that impacts our water supplies and puts us at risk for wildfires, as we've experienced so many times in Saskatchewan and especially in this last year? There is no way to predict. So, the approach is to recognize what our climate risks are, what impact those extremes would have on our most critical assets and services.

Once we have those answers, we can move into strategizing how we can best mitigate the risks our communities face due to climate. There is no hundred percent solution here, but there are best practices and a growing body of support

For many municipalities, our roads and infrastructure are aging and weren't built with extreme climate events in mind.

Extreme climate, yes. That is our reality and has always been. But where does extreme climate end and extreme climate events begin? It's all about frequency and intensity. We can handle 3 feet of snow over several weeks, no problem. We're used to that. But can we handle almost 3 feet of snow in 24 hours? What impact would that have on our equipment, our workers, and our buildings? At what points is our infrastructure at risk? Do we know? And if we know, do we know what we are going to do to mitigate that risk?

And that is what is at the heart of climate resilience - identifying potential hazards, our risks from those hazards, and how we might mitigate those risks. Once we have those three steps covered, then we can move into planning and action. Fortunately, municipalities have strong support for taking action through Canada's National Adaptation Strategy. In November, 2022, the Government of Canada announced the release of Canada's National Adaptation Strategy: Building Resilient Communities and a Strong Economy, which included \$1.6 billion in new federal funding commitments to help municipalities develop their own climate adaptation strategies. The funding includes grants through the Green Municipal Fund and the Disaster Mitigation and Adaption fund, to help municipalities with climate-focused and natural and built infrastructure projects to increase the resilience of Canadian communities to the impacts of climate events.

In the end, increasing municipal resilience is something we all, as elected officials and municipal staff, have a vested interest in. This our community, our ratepayers rely on us to protect them and our infrastructure, and we want to help provide them with safety and sustainability. There are many resources available to us to do so, and it is our job to be informed, to be mindful, and to work hard at mitigating the risks we all face. To quote the Honourable Jonathan

Wilkinson, Minister of Natural Resources:

*"Canadians in every region of the country are already feeling the effects of climate change, and the costs of these impacts are projected to rise to \$25 billion by 2025 and to the range of \$100 billion annually by 2050. Inaction is not an option. Through the National Adaptation Strategy, we will advance key resilience and adaptation measures to mitigate these changes, preserve livelihoods and protect our communities and the critical infrastructure we depend on. The result will be a stronger, safer, and more prosperous place to call home."*

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#### Sources:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/environmental-protection-and-sustainability/a-made-in-saskatchewan-climate-change-strategy>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2022/11/canadas-national-adaptation-strategy-will-protect-communities-and-build-a-strong-economy.html>

<https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/ca/news/catastrophe/federal-government-commits-1-6-billion-to-new-climate-adaptation-strategy-428644.aspx>

<https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/>

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/dmaf-faac/index-eng.html>

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**Community Planning is driven by a proactive and collaborative approach with municipalities to support growth, certainty for investment and landowners, and the protection and promotion of what already exists in the community.**

Staff are registered Professional Planners who meet all membership requirements for education and responsible professional planning experience with the Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institute and the Canadian Institute of Planners. Servicing contracts with external planning and Geographic Information System (GIS) specialists are managed by the department to provide additional planning and mapping support to members.

## Getting to know SARM

# Community Planning



**Jennifer Chamberlin**  
Manager, Community Planning

### **Members come to Community Planning to:**

- Develop Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws.
- Prepare planning bylaw amendments and consolidations.
- Create land use maps.
- Review and advise on subdivision and development applications and bylaw interpretation.
- Write public and landowner notices and advise on public hearing and consultation processes.
- Draft informal enforcement notices and formal enforcement orders.
- Access planning guides and reference materials.
- Conduct policy research and best practice review.
- Conduct educational planning presentations and municipal workshops.

### **Recent/Current Initiatives:**

- Support of regional municipal partners in developing harmonized plans under the Targeted Sector Support Grant.
- Council meetings to discuss solar farms and drafting RM solar farm regulations.
- Carbon capture utilization and storage project proposal and RM planning bylaw review.
- Development of RM maps to visually represent residential setback regulations for Intensive Livestock Operations.
- Participation in the Ministry of Government Relations review of The Subdivision Regulations.
- Participation in Saskatchewan LiDAR mapping data acquisition collaboration initiative.

# MEMBER NEWS

## IN MEMORIAM

### ANTHONY HOFFART RM OF FOX VALLEY NO. 171 IN MEMORIAM

Anthony Hoffart passed away on April 5th, 2023. He passed away peacefully at the Southwest Integrated Health Facility in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, holding his wife's hand, after a courageous battle with cancer. Anthony was involved in his community and spent many hours volunteering to make his community a better place to live. He served on St. Mary's Parish Council, built the set for Night Fox Theatre, drove school bus as a spare, and helped with PAA classes within the school. He was a member of the Fox Valley Recreation Board and spent many hours maintaining the local swimming pool. Anthony was also very proud to be the Reeve for the R.M. of Fox Valley. Anthony spent many hours providing road supervision, attending meetings and problem solving for the RM community. Anthony will be dearly missed in the Fox Valley Community and was lead to his resting place by the RM's new Cat 160 Motor Grader in honor of his years of service. A memorial picnic table has been placed at the community swimming pool in memorandum of Anthony Hoffart. ▢

### CARL SINGBEIL RM OF SUTTON NO. 103 IN MEMORIAM

Carl Singbeil was born on October 2, 1956 and passed away on September 28, 2023 at the age of 66. He and the love of his life, Kathy, raised 2 sons on the ranch west of Mossbank. As well as ranching, farming, doing income tax, and working for the Farm Debt Review Board, Carl served as Councillor for Division 5 in the RM of Sutton from 1999-2002. Carl was a loving husband, father and grandfather and will be deeply missed by his family, neighbours and friends. ▢



### JOSEPH DEYELL RM OF COALFIELDS NO. 4 IN MEMORIAM

Joseph Deyell, Late of Estevan and formerly of Frobisher, SK passed away on November 4, 2023, at the age of 91. Joseph will be remembered for the many hard-working jobs he had during

his lifetime as a long-haul truck driver, SaskTel Linesman, Battery Operator for various Oil Companies, starting a farm called JD Farms and serving on Council for the RM of Coalfields No.4

Joseph enjoyed many hobbies like playing bingo, watching the TV Show Highway to Hell, watching quad races and belonging to the CB Club.

Joseph was a dedicated Councillor for the RM of Coalfields No.4 Division 4 from 2011 to 2014. As a Councillor, Joseph will be remembered for his wisdom and dedication he had to his division and to the ratepayers of the RM of Coalfields No.4. He was an honest and fair Councillor, and his knowledge of Division 4 was a true asset to the municipality and will be dearly missed around the Council table.

Joseph will be remembered by his children and their families: son Randy (Alice), Cheryl (Winifred), Patricia (Garth) and Kevin (Jenna McGuire) and 11 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren and 1 great great grandchild.

Joseph was predeceased by his parents, William and Emilene (nee Gillis) Deyell; brothers, Clare (Berth) and twin boys in infancy.

Joseph will be greatly missed by all at the RM of Coalfields No. 4 and send their deepest condolences to all family and friends. ▢



### **BILL GILBERT** **RM OF ARLINGTON NO. 79** **IN MEMORIAM**

William "Bill" Gilbert passed away peacefully on December 20, 2023, after a short battle with cancer. Bill was born in Eastend hospital on August 30, 1948. He spent almost his entire life farming in Eastend, except for the 2 years he spent at SAIT in Calgary after he graduated high School. Bill was a quite man who was incredibly hard-working, generous, capable, and always willing to lend a hand to anyone who needed it. He loved nature, camping, hunting and fishing, and more than anything else, his family. Bill was Councillor for Division 3 from 1993 to 2002. During his time on council he oversaw many enhancements to the roads in his division. The municipality benefitted from his wisdom and knowledge. Bill will be greatly missed by all who knew him. □



### **WILLIAM MARKOVICH** **RM OF HOODOO NO. 401** **IN MEMORIAM**

William Markovich of Wakaw, SK, passed away peacefully on December 22, 2023, with his family by his side at the age of

89. He was Dad to few, Grandpa to some, Willie to many, and will be fondly remembered by all. William lived and loved farming, successfully seeing through countless and bountiful prairie harvests. Meticulously maintaining his farm with great pride, he found happiness behind the wheel of a grain truck or a combine, and passed this appreciation for the land down through generations, on a homestead that was in his family for nearly a century.

He served at various levels of municipal government, including the R.M. of Hoodoo as Division 6 Councillor from 1974-2001, the Board of Directors for the Wakaw Union Hospital, and the Lakeview Pioneer Lodge, selflessly offering his guidance and efforts for the betterment of his community. Willie will be missed by all at the RM of Hoodoo No. 401. □



### **BRUCE BOOK** **RM OF LOREBURN NO. 254** **IN MEMORIAM**

Bruce Book passed away on June 12, 2023 at the age of 90.

Bruce was a councillor in Division 3 from 1967-1974 then served as Reeve from 1975 to 1998.

Bruce and Esther farmed in the RM of Loreburn, and operated both a cattle and grain farm. Bruce will be remembered as good natured and hard working. He will be remembered for his many contributions to the municipality and community while on Council and various committees. The RM of Loreburn is grateful for the time he served and the dedication he made during his 31 years on council. □



### **BERNIE MIKOLAS** **RM OF SPY HILL NO. 152** **IN MEMORIAM**

Bernie Mikolas was born on the farm in Gerald, SK September 1, 1938, to Karl and Rose Mikolas and passed away in Esterhazy Hospital on November 24, 2023, at the age of 85. Bernie was always a farm boy at heart. He always said he's not sure how he made it through school because he couldn't concentrate on his studies. All he could think about was farming.

Bernie met Germaine Kurucz on June 24, 1961; they were married. They had two children Gregory and Kelli. Eventually Bernie bought the family farm. As well as farming 5 quarter sections, he raised pigs, Charolais cattle, chickens, and horses. He also worked at the Esterhazy Potash mines.

Bernie was a wonderful friend to all and a great community supporter. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, Sask Wheat Pool Committee and St. Anthony's Hospital Board. Bernie was a councillor for the RM of Spy Hill No. 152 from 1985-1989, before coming Reeve in November 1989, a position he held for 23 years. He always tried to be understanding of everyone's position and took the time to talk to all parties before making critical decisions.

The legacy he leaves behind will forever be felt on the golf course, in the curling rinks, in the soil of the fields, in the exhaust of the tractor, in the history of the RM of Spy Hill, in the memories he made with friends and family. Bernie enjoyed life and can rest knowing he will never be forgotten for the great man he was. □





**GERALD OLSEN**  
**RM OF BIRCH HILLS**  
**NO. 460**  
**IN MEMORIAM**

Gerald loved every season of life on the farm. Seeding, harvesting, fixing, welding, building, washing machinery, crop checking, trips down south, coffee in the big house, English Mastiff dogs, and his most important job of being the 'roady' for our family as we travelled, sang, and shared the gospel over 3 provinces. His role on earth was a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, friend, brother, uncle and farmer. In addition, he served as a Councillor for the RM of Birch Hills from 1986-2014. He lived each of these roles with a strong faith in his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ▢



**ED LIPINSKI**  
**RM OF PONASS LAKE**  
**NO. 367**  
**IN MEMORIAM**

Ed Lipinski immigrated from Poland with his family in 1929. They homesteaded on NW 35-37-14 W2 and then established a home quarter on SE 6-38-13 W2.

He spent 40 years there farming with parents, his wife Marie and then 3 sons. He semi-retired in 1986 with his sons continuing to farm.

Ed was elected as Councillor for Division 1 in 1985.

He was a dedicated ratepayer that tried to make the RM a better place to live and farm. Actively involved on council for 17 years till 2002 along with his good friend Paul Farber as Reeve.

He would purposely drive to and from Fosston and the family farms on different roads to monitor their conditions. At the same time Ed was an active village council member in Fosston. He continued on village council, responsible for village water until he and Marie moved to Wadena in 2014. He was president of Fosston Seniors for many years. Active member on St. Mary's RC, and the Knights of Columbus Council. They enjoyed travel and curling locally.

His wit and conversations put smiles on all the people who interacted with on both councils and in the community. As hundreds of other residents, he was true rural person at heart. His time and effort contributed to our great province.

He was predeceased by wife Marie, in November 2021.

Ed Lipinski passed away January 13, 2023, at age of 100 years and 6 months. ▢



**DOUGLAS MUIR**  
**RM OF PONASS LAKE**  
**NO. 367**  
**IN MEMORIAM**

William Douglas Muir passed away Jan, 26th 2023 at the age of 87. Douglas was born on his parent's homestead on the NW24-38-16-w2 on the 2nd of May 1935. Douglas farmed ever since he was 15, and actively farmed until he was 85. He had a mixed farm with beef cattle and dry land crops. In his younger days Douglas trapped muskrats and enjoyed hunting. In 1963 he married Yvonne Gjerde of Nora Sk. They had 5 children and 9 grandchildren.

Douglas was a loving father and husband. He enjoyed dancing, curling, gardening, and visiting with friends and neighbors. He was also a local historian as he could accurately recall names and dates of people and events.

While Douglas enjoyed traveling, he was happiest when he was at home. Like many others in the area, Douglas's life revolved around farming, and it was what he enjoyed most. He had no interest in retirement but was rather driven by the anticipation of each new spring, summer, and fall. His farming career spanned four generations and over 70 years.

Douglas was elected as a councillor in 1983 thru 2007 in Division 6 for the R.M. of Ponass Lake No 367. His father also served as Reeve in the 1950's. Douglas enjoyed his many years on council and will be greatly missed. ▢



## JOE FRUHSTUK RM OF MARIPOSA NO. 350 IN MEMORIAM

Fruhstuk - December 3, 1943 - April 14, 2023 Joe worked for the R.M. of Mariposa No. 350 for the later years of his working career after leaving his position as the manager of the Tramping Lake Credit Union. He began working at the R.M. of Mariposa No. 350 by doing a variety of jobs. This led him to decide to further his education and take the necessary courses to become an administrator with the R.M. He did just that and was able to do his practical training in the R.M. of Mariposa No. 350, where he was able to continue on as the administrator in 1982. At that time the R.M. office was located in Broadacres, SK. This was an extremely old building with no running water. It was an amazing day when the office was moved into the Town of Kerrobert in to a new building in the spring of 1997. Here Joe was able to finish off his career until his retirement in 2004. During his time with the R.M., Joe was happy to share his knowledge with others that he was given the opportunity to train. He enjoyed going to SARM conventions and working alongside members of the R.M. council as well. ▢



## GARTH ALLAN RM OF GOLDEN WEST NO. 95 IN MEMORIAM

Garth Allan of Corning, SK, passed away on September 20, 2023 at the age of 73. Garth grew up on a farm by Corning, and returned home after obtaining an agriculture diploma. He and Donna were married in 1975, and their three boys kept them busy. He farmed alongside his father and brothers, and eventually a son, and also ran a pedigree seed grower operation.

He was a legion member, served on the board of directors for the UGG, and loved playing softball, curling, travelling and spending time with his grandkids. Above all, Garth said that being a Dad was his favorite job.

Always one to serve the community, Garth was Division 5 Councillor from 1997 - 2003, and Reeve from 2003 - 2012. He believed that the R.M. needed to continuously upgrade assets to not fall behind, but also kept a keen eye on the budget to ensure spending wasn't wasteful. He had a great relationship with Council and all employees, and fostered a team atmosphere within the organization.

He is dearly missed by all who knew him. ▢



## RONALD KLATT RM OF GOLDEN WEST NO. 95 IN MEMORIAM

Ronald Klatt of Stoughton, SK, passed away on April 28, 2023 at the age of 70. Ronald was born and raised in the Handsworth area, and after a brief time away to work, he returned to the family farm to work alongside his father. He loved the farm, almost as much as he loved his wife Ruth, and their son Michel.

Ronald served as the Division 2 Councillor from 1996 - 2001. His father previously held the position, and that seat is now filled by his wife - public service truly is a family affair. Ronald always sought to be fair to all parties in decisions Council made, and one of the issues he was most passionate about was water flow and diversion. He enjoyed the comradery with other Council members, and the socializing after meetings meant that he was often late coming home for supper.

He is dearly missed by all who knew him. ▢

RETIREMENT



**RICK BARCLAY, FOREMAN  
OAKDALE 320  
RETIREMENT**

The R.M. of Oakdale No. 320 would like to recognize Rick Barclay for his years of service as the R.M. Foreman and congratulate him on his retirement. Rick began working for the R.M. in 2010, and he became the Foreman in 2016.

Council held a retirement barbecue for Rick in June 2023 in appreciation of his years of service and for the expertise and wisdom he demonstrated throughout the years. Reeve Darwin Whitfield and R.M. of Oakdale Council presented Rick with a Glen Scrimshaw print at the barbecue. We are grateful for the knowledge that Rick provided throughout his service and wish him the best in his retirement. □

**HOLLEY ODGERS  
COALFIELDS 4  
RETIREMENT**

Holley Odgers RM of Coalfields No. 04 Retirement The RM of Coalfields No. 04 Council and Staff wish to congratulate Holley Odgers on her retirement. Holley served as the Administrator from 2017 to 2023 while also holding many other positions on boards and committees for the RM of Coalfields. Throughout her tenure Holley has been an exceptional public servant, dedicating countless hours above and beyond to serving the RM of Coalfields No.4.

Holley had a knowledge of business and leadership that has contributed to numerous initiatives that has enriched our RM. Holley brought a wealth of knowledge when it came to the Agriculture and Oil and Gas sector, always advocating for the RM and its economic growth.

Holley embarks on a well-deserved retirement and the RM of Coalfields Council, coworkers, and fellow board members wish the best as she embarks on this new chapter in her life.

Congratulations on your retirement. □

**GORDON SPROAT  
KINGSLEY 124  
RETIREMENT**

After a combined total of 15 years, the R.M. of Kingsley No. 124 would like to bid farewell to Gordon Sproat as he has officially retired from Council.

Gord served as Division 1 Councillor from 2006-2013 & as Reeve from 2013-2015 & again from 2018-2023. Gord was a very influential leader in our community and served the needs of all R.M. of Kingsley ratepayers. His contributions & commitments to our municipality will be remembered for years to come & we thank him for his many years of service! □



**KEVIN VOLLMER  
LOREBURN 254  
RETIREMENT**

The RM of Loreburn No. 254 would like to thank Kevin Vollmer for the 20 years of service he gave as Councillor for Division 2 for four years (2002-2006) and sixteen years (2006-2022) he served as Reeve for the RM.

Kevin genuinely cared about the people that worked and lived in the RM and it showed. Kevin could talk to anyone and his experience and wisdom will be missed. We wish him all the best in his retirement and thank him for his years on Council.

Pictured Current Reeve Brad Norrish with Past Reeve Kevin Vollmer □

THANKS  
FOR SHARING  
YOUR STORIES  
WITH US!

**Member News  
Submission Tips:**

- Send photos as separate JPG, PNG, TIFF or PDF files (in a Word document).
- Try to send original photos not ones that have been scanned from printed documents or taken off of websites.
- Photos must be 300 dpi resolution. Tip: check the file size. If the file is less than 100 kb, it may not print properly.
- Check your phone's camera resolution before taking photos. Ensure that the camera's settings are for High, Highest Quality or Maximum resolution.
- Write-up length maximum: 250 words.
- Send in submissions using the online form at <https://sarm.ca/events/awards-and-recognition/submissions/>





**ROBERT BROST**  
**EYE HILL 382**  
**RETIREMENT**

Pictured is Reeve Robert Brost signing documents at his last meeting of Council in December 2023, it was at this meeting that Robert surprised Council by announcing his retirement effective December 31, 2023.

Robert served as Councillor for Division 3 for 2 years from January 1992 to December 1994.

Robert then served as Reeve from January 1995, to December 31, 2023.

Robert served his community and rural Saskatchewan for 32 years.

Robert served on many Boards and Committees, most notably the Golden Twilight Lodge; St. Joseph's Health Centre, and the Local Communiplex.

During Robert's time on Council he attended nearly every single SARM midterm and Main conventions and over time was known by many people in rural Saskatchewan.

Council would like to thank Robert for his tireless dedication to the RM during his years on Council. □



**GARRY STONE**  
**LOREBURN 354**  
**RETIREMENT**

The Rural Municipality of Loreburn No. 254 would like to thank and acknowledge the 31 years of service Garry Stone dedicated to the R.M. as Councillor in Division 6. Garry was a trusted voice on council and when he spoke you listened. His experience and knowledge will be missed. Garry was extremely well read and had many interests which made him an invaluable resource to council as a whole. He never missed a meeting in 31 years. We wish him all the best in his retirement and thank him for the generous contribution he made to his community. □

**RICK BARCLAY**  
**OAKDALE 320**  
**RETIREMENT**

The R.M. of Oakdale No. 320 would like to recognize Rick Barclay for his years of service as the R.M. Foreman and congratulate him on his retirement. Rick began working for the R.M. in 2010, and he became the Foreman in 2016.

Council held a retirement barbecue for Rick in June 2023 in appreciation of his years of service and for the expertise and wisdom he demonstrated throughout the years. Reeve Darwin Whitfield and R.M. of Oakdale Council presented Rick with a Glen Scrimshaw print at the barbecue. We are grateful for the knowledge that Rick provided throughout his service and wish him the best in his retirement. □



**CLARENCE FRADETTE**  
**LOMOND 37**  
**RETIREMENT**

The R.M. of Lomond No. 37 would like to recognize Clarence Fradette for his years of service as an equipment operator and congratulate him on his retirement. Clarence began his career as an equipment operator for the R.M. of Lomond No. 37 in May 2002 and retired in November 2023.

In appreciation of his years of service, Reeve Desmond McKenzie presented Clarence with an engraved plaque and a gift certificate at the annual Christmas supper. The R.M. of Lomond No. 37 Council and Staff wish Clarence the best in his retirement. □

**WILLIAM (BILL) HAYES**  
**BUCKLAND 491**  
**RETIREMENT**

The RM of Buckland No. 491 expresses its heartfelt appreciation to Bill Hayes as he concludes an exemplary 23 years of dedicated service to our local government. Bill served as Councillor for Division 6 from 2000 - 2023, working tirelessly to shape our community into a better place for all.

As Councillor, Bill served with integrity, commitment, and leadership. His knowledge and unwavering devotion to the RM has helped enrich our municipality.

As Bill starts his well-earned retirement journey, we send our sincere appreciation and extend our warmest wishes for this new chapter in his life. His contribution to public service will be remembered. □



Annual

# CONVENTION

& Trade Show 2024

## Agenda

### Wednesday, March 13

- AM 8:00 Registration/Trade Show
- 10:00 Opening Ceremonies
- 10:30 Addresses
- 11:00 Award Presentations
- 11:30 Fireside Chat
- PM 12:00 Lunch/Trade Show
- 1:30 Opposition Leader Address
- 1:45 Federal Government Address
- 2:00 Presentation
- 2:30 Presentation
- 3:00 Dialogue Session 1
- 4:00 Dialogue Session 2

### Thursday, March 14

- AM 8:00 Registration/Trade Show
- 9:00 Resolutions
- 11:30 Lunch/Trade Show
- PM 1:00 Premier's Address
- 1:30 Bear Pit Session
- 3:15 FCM Presentation
- 3:20 MHI Presentation
- 4:00 Presentation
- 4:15 Presentation
- 4:30 RMAA Address

### Friday, March 15

- AM 8:00 Networking Breakfast
- 9:00 SARM Division Meetings
- 10:45 SARM Financials
- 11:00 SARM Member Services Presentation
- 11:15 Presentation
- 11:30 STARS Presentation
- 11:45 Adjournment





JOHN DEERE



# NO QUIT.

There's always more work to be done. You know that better than anyone. And Brandt works tirelessly to keep you rolling every single day.

## Superior Techs

If you need service, Brandt has skilled factory-trained technicians who'll get the job done right, fast.

## More Locations

Access Canada's largest John Deere dealer network—56 dealerships all working to keep you productive.

## Ultimate Support

Minimize downtime with support around the clock, all year long. Brandt is always a phone call away, 24/7/365.

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