

# RURAL COUNCILLOR

SARM

2024  
FALL

VOLUME 57 / #3

**A CHAT**

**STEPPING  
DOWN  
& LOOKING BACK**

**STUDENTS**

**STUDENT AID  
IS AVAILABLE  
FOR POST-SECONDARY  
STUDENTS**

**1ST CALL**

**DIGGING INTO  
SASK 1ST  
CALL'S  
HISTORY**

**HINTS**

**PROPERTY  
SELF-INSURANCE  
PROGRAM  
HELPFUL HINTS**



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# RURAL COUNCILLOR

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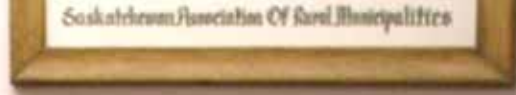


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**Our Vision: Strong, autonomous  
municipalities powered by vibrant, diverse  
economies that build a sustainable future  
for rural Saskatchewan.**

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



# STEPPING DOWN & LOOKING BACK

## A CHAT WITH FORMER SARM PRESIDENT, RAY ORB

To Ray Orb, leadership and learning go hand in hand. It's an attitude that's earned him not only the respect of those he works with, but their admiration too. Since joining SARM in 2004, Orb worked his way from Director of Division 2 to his role as SARM President, which he recently stepped down from this August. Before he left, we had the great pleasure of chatting with him about looking back, moving forward—and teeing up.

**What's one piece of advice you wish you'd had when starting out? And what's something you knew instinctively that's still serving you?**

A few people did give me some advice when I was starting out. But the one thing I wish I'd realized was that I didn't have to worry that I'd be alone. I was part of a team—and an incredible one. There would be other people around who'd support me. I had a great board, and a great staff—and I still do.

It's a learning curve, and when I think all the way back to 2004 when I was first elected to the board, I can tell you, I didn't have a clue! I had some experience, of course, as a councillor, but luckily enough, the Executive Director at the time took me aside and said, "If you're ever unsure or don't know where to start, use your experience from life and home." And a lot of times, I still do that.

As for the trait I've always had that's still serving me? I like to listen to people first. In fact, a new board member commented on it the other day and said, "I thought you'd be the one taking control of the Q&A when we have delegations." And I said, "No, I like to listen to what you have to say first—and might even be the last person to comment—but by that time, I have an idea of what everyone is thinking and can respond thoughtfully and course correct where necessary." I'm still like that and always have been. I think it's served our board well.

**Tell us one of your favourite memories from working at SARM.**

I've met so many good people and have had lots of great experiences, but you know what I think stands out? My family coming to the convention in Saskatoon when I was elected president. One of my grandsons was there running around yelling, "Papa, Papa," and even though that was a long time ago, it still stands out as one of my favourite memories.

**Tell us about someone whose support has helped guide you along your path.**

That would definitely be my wife, Val. She supported me when I ran as a director, and supported me as vice president, and then president—all the way through. As the mayor of the town we live in, she has lots of experience of her own to draw on, so that relationship has helped me a lot.

A second person who comes to mind is Neal Hardy. He was the SARM president when I was elected in 2004 and was the one who actually convinced me that the time was right to try and move up to become vice president. So, in a lot of ways, Neal was my mentor. He had a lot of political experience, was well respected in the RM and at SARM, and still is. He received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit last year. He's quite an outstanding gentleman.

**What's one thing that you learned over the years that you're most grateful for?**

I probably learned this the hard way, but I would say it's modesty—to have an attitude where you're willing to learn and willing to listen—because you certainly don't know it all! And I say that I learned that the hard way because, like most people, getting on a board or getting involved with a new organization, you might think that you know a lot more than you actually do. So I think a good place to start is to be willing to learn and to always be kind and patient.

And that's something that I am grateful for—learning to appreciate the people around me, and to make sure they know that I appreciate them.

**What are your hopes for SARM in the coming years.**

That we build on the respect that we've worked so hard to earn. I believe SARM is a really well-respected organization, not only among our members, but among all of the political parties, provincial and federal. We travel to Ottawa at least once a year and try to meet with federal cabinet ministers and opposition party members, and people know who we are because of the reputable SARM members who came before us. That level of respect is something that you just don't get overnight. It takes a long time to acquire, and you don't want to lose it either. That's what makes SARM advocacy so effective. So that makes me very hopeful—the respect we have among our colleagues will remain in place, and SARM will continue working to keep our good reputation.



**"A GOOD PLACE TO START IS TO BE WILLING TO LEARN AND TO ALWAYS BE KIND AND PATIENT."**



**"I WAS PART OF A TEAM— AND AN INCREDIBLE ONE."**

**As you step into this new chapter, what are you looking forward to most?**

Well, the grandchildren already have a lot of things for us to do this summer, so you could say it's been pre-arranged that we'll be spending more time with our

family. We have a place at Elbow right beside one of the best golf courses in Saskatchewan, so I'll be trying to get out more to improve my golf game, too. I'm really looking forward to making some new memories, and I think my family is too.



# REFLECTIONS AND GRATITUDE - MY JOURNEY WITH SARM

BY JAY MEYER, SARM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Twenty years ago, I embarked on a journey that shaped my career and my life. I started working with dedicated individuals who tirelessly served their communities, displaying passion and selflessness to ensure their communities thrived. Over the next two decades, I assumed many roles supporting municipalities, opening my eyes to the hard work and dedication required to further grow communities.

I remember driving into Shaunavon, Saskatchewan, not knowing anyone or even the location of my office. My first day was marked by an unforgettable moment when I mistakenly entered the wrong building, only to be kindly directed two buildings south by the welcoming owner in the good old Saskatchewan way. This experience set the tone for the warmth and friendliness that characterized my career working for rural people. As I walked into the building that would become my workplace, a lady, who still teases me about my geekiness, greeted me. That day turned out to be the most important day of my life, paving the way for numerous opportunities including meeting a newly graduated University of Lethbridge alumnus from Admiral, Saskatchewan, who would later become my wife.

My first seven years at the Shaunavon Business Development Center were

invaluable. I learned the nuances between a resolution and a motion, what an in-camera session is, and the significance of communities collaborating by day followed by competition on the ice or the ball diamond at night. I realized the vital role of volunteers and how a simple conversation with a neighbour could solve almost any problem.

In 2011, the Town of Shaunavon honoured me by appointing me as their town manager, a position I held for nearly four years. This role taught me to let criticism roll off my back, as every decision made by council inevitably upsets someone. It provided invaluable on-the-job experience in dealing with people, highlighting that 80% of success in most jobs' hinges on interpersonal skills. I was fortunate to be surrounded by mentors who I now call friends, people who provided encouragement and support, guided me, and allowed me to grow and make mistakes.

In 2014, leaving Shaunavon was one of the hardest decisions of my life. It was difficult to leave a place that gave me so much; a place that took a chance on me and helped me grow professionally and personally. It felt like a call from the big leagues when SARM took a chance on me, it was an opportunity my friends told me I could not turn down, and it turned out to be a perfect fit. The next

ten years of my career were incredibly rewarding at a place I am so proud to be part of. I joined one of the most influential nonprofit associations in the nation. The timing was perfect.

**AS I STEP AWAY AT THE END OF THE YEAR, I AM OFTEN ASKED ABOUT THE MEMORIES I WILL CHERISH DURING MY TENURE AT SARM.**

Here are just a few. My time with SARM began with the board developing their first governance policy to clarify roles and responsibilities, a tool we use daily. Good governance has been a priority of SARM's for years and now the board walked the talk. Concurrently, SARM purchased land and built a new office, an \$8 million investment resulting in a state-of-the-art building. Our team could not ask for a better location to call our own. This historic investment will be paid off in 2025. The middle years were marked by challenges, such as our sister association's debate over merging SUMA and SARM and changing their name to imply they represented all municipalities in the province. This contentious issue persisted for nearly two years, but ultimately, our urban counterparts decided to maintain the status quo, allowing us to rebuild trust between the associations.

During this period, society also grappled with COVID-19. Three days after the 2020 SARM Annual Convention, we had to send the entire SARM team home and, as with many others, develop a plan to keep the association operating while ensuring safety and well-being for the board, team, and families. We made it through, though not without enduring some bumps and bruises that are still felt today.

Moving out of COVID was particularly rewarding as we completed SARM's Capacity Enhancement Project. This initiative elevated our internal operations, revamping our organizational structure to better support our 30+ staff. After a year and a half, a poll of the entire team showed that 100% believed the changes would benefit our membership, a belief that remains evident today. These are just a few developments I remember vividly while being with SARM, key actions that defined my role.

I often reflect on the numerous opportunities I have been provided during my time with SARM. From attending provincial and federal meetings with MLAs, MPs, and Ministers from all parties, to forming lasting friendships with Executive Directors from every province and territory. The experience has been invaluable. SARM conventions and June division meetings allowed me to engage with members, understand their challenges, and celebrate their successes. One of the highlights was meeting Prime Minister Harper at our 2015 SARM Annual Convention. I was also fortunate to travel across the entire province annually, touring the many remarkable areas of Saskatchewan. Most importantly, the greatest opportunity was being put in a position to learn personally and professionally from such knowledgeable and dedicated board members and staff along the way.

**I COULD NOT HAVE ASKED FOR A MORE SUPPORTIVE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE**

**PRESIDENT THE ENTIRE TIME WITH SARM. PRESIDENT ORB HAS TAUGHT ME SO MUCH AND I AM JUST SO FORTUNATE TO CALL HIM A FRIEND.**

Recently, someone told me that it is not about what you do at the end of the day but how you make people feel. This resonated deeply with me, as SARM has always made me feel at home. Even though our office is in the big city, we have a small-town culture, a culture that is crucial for SARM to continue to grow together.

Reflecting on my career to date, it is clear that each decade brought unique lessons and growth. The first ten years were about learning the fundamentals and understanding the importance of hard work and dedication. During this time, I discovered the value of community, and the impact passionate, selfless people have in making their communities better places to live. The second decade, spent with SARM, was a period of professional and organizational growth. I learned the significance of planning and capacity building, which elevated our internal operations and benefited our membership. Each stage, with its different lessons, has shaped my approach to leadership and community engagement, reinforcing the importance of dedication, relationships, and vision. Throughout my career, the common thread has been the supportive and caring people of rural Saskatchewan, always looking out for their neighbours, regardless of where they come from.

While cleaning my office, I found a letter from former Cypress Hills MLA Wayne Elhard, sent to me in 2005, just four months into my career working with municipalities. He wrote, "I particularly enjoyed your comments in the paper about revitalizing rural Saskatchewan and improving the economic viability of this area. I agree with your assertion that

we cannot give up." Let's promise to continue working together and not let this crazy world tear us apart. We cannot give up and will not give up on rural life. I strongly believe in this motto and the strength and importance of rural communities to our province.

One thing I love most about rural Saskatchewan is that we have each other's backs, and we come together during good times and bad times. Thank you all for having mine while I was at the helm of SARM. I truly felt your support and hope I moved the needle just a bit, so SARM is now a better place than when I arrived. You have allowed me to grow, trusted in my abilities, and given me the freedom to learn from my mistakes. Your support throughout this journey has been invaluable. The last 10 years have provided me with numerous opportunities, and I am grateful to SARM. Working for SARM has truly changed my life.

**I WISH TO CONCLUDE BY RETURNING TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN 20 YEARS AGO—SOUTHWEST SASKATCHEWAN. I EXTEND MY HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL THE MUNICIPALITIES THAT PLACED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN A YOUNG MAN, FROM KENOSEE LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN, WHO DID NOT KNOW UP FROM DOWN WHEN HE STARTED HIS JOURNEY.**

They invested in me and brought me to the place where I met that young lady from Admiral, Saskatchewan, just two doors down from my office—the best thing that has happened to me in my career.



# WHAT I'VE LEARNED IN MY FIRST SIX MONTHS

BY DARREN STEINLEY,  
SARM DIVISION 3 DIRECTOR

I was excited to be elected to the SARM board in March 2024 and have loved every minute of my new role so far. I quickly learned that SARM covers a vast range of topics and gaining the knowledge needed to understand them is an immense task, the sheer volume of information is overwhelming. The scope of topics spans health care, policing, broadband, road and bridge construction and maintenance, gravel management, and overall infrastructure development, to name only a few. Each topic comes with its own set of complexities and challenges, requiring a steep learning curve to effectively contribute to the board's decisions and initiatives. With the help of the SARM board and staff, I've made the transition quickly. While I'm still the "rookie" on the team I feel like I'm now up to speed and a fully contributing member of the SARM board. I want to take a few minutes of your time to outline what I've learned and what we've accomplished so far.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the board's major accomplishments recently was working with SARM staff to negotiate a new agreement with the Ministry of Highways to update and continue offering the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) program. Both SARM and the Ministry of Highways found creative ways to strengthen the program, including an increase in per kilometre funding for Clearing the Path (CTP)

corridors and an increase in assistance for bridge and large diameter culvert projects. While we still have lots of work to do, I'm excited about the value this program will have for the quality of transportation infrastructure in the RMs.

## CHALLENGES

It's not a big surprise, but the main barriers to many issues SARM deals with are the lack of sufficient funding and restrictive union rules. These are most prevalent in the health care, policing, and education sectors. While unions may play a role in advocating for individual rights, some of their rules hinder overall progress, waste time and money, and diminish the quality of service delivered, which negatively impacts rural Saskatchewan.

## LAND OWNERSHIP DEBATE

Land ownership, particularly foreign land ownership, is a contentious topic in Saskatchewan. I'm still forming my stance on this issue and welcome input from others. This matter affects new farmers, land rental opportunities, and farm start-ups. It's also crucial to consider the financial needs of retiring farmers.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government poses more challenges than we might think. I hope for a new government in the coming year to prevent further damage to our economy. The carbon tax is detrimental

to Canada and the capital gains exemption increase hurts the agricultural economy. The current federal government's policies are stifling the agricultural sector and future restrictions could severely impact the ag economy.

## LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Jay Meyer, SARM's current Executive Director, has built an exceptional team at SARM. Although we will miss him, I'm excited to work with Laurel Feltin, SARM's incoming Executive Director. She is organized, efficient, and intelligent and will be a valuable asset to the board. The staff at SARM are also an excellent and valuable resource, and I look forward to collaborating with them all.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I'm currently exploring what SARM should and should not be involved in. There have been requests to add engineers and auditors to our staff, which could benefit our members. I'm open to feedback on these or any other suggestions to ensure we utilize our resources effectively.

## GRATITUDE

Lastly, I extend my thanks and gratitude to Ray Orb for his years of service and dedication to SARM. He has been an outstanding leader and mentor; his contributions will be difficult to replace.



# LOW-HEIGHT BRIDGE BARRICADES



**BY ALEXANDER UDEY,  
M.SC., P. ENG.  
MUNICIPAL BRIDGE  
ENGINEER, SARM**

Saskatchewan boasts a thriving agricultural sector that stands as a cornerstone of its economy and cultural heritage. At the forefront of supporting this vital industry is the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), a pivotal organization dedicated to empowering rural communities across the province. Through innovative policies and steadfast advocacy, SARM plays a crucial role in bolstering infrastructure, enhancing agricultural practices, and fostering sustainable development within Saskatchewan's rural municipalities. SARM is keenly aware of the needs of the farming and resource economies and understands that rural bridges can cause issues with land access by large farm implements when the barricades are too high to accommodate the equipment.

In Saskatchewan, all bridges are designed to the Canadian Highway Bridge Design Code (CSA S6) which specifies the minimum design criteria for all the components of bridges, including barriers. The Bridge Code requires that barricades meet or exceed a minimum height (from road surface to the top of the barricade) and that the barricade is crash tested. The minimum barrier height for RM roads is 680 mm (26.8 inches). However, the adopted barrier used in Saskatchewan has a height of 762 mm (30 inches).

Aware that the height of the adopted barricade causes issues with farming equipment, in 2021, SARM began a project to investigate alternative barricade designs that could be adopted in Saskatchewan that would be at the lowest possible allowable height. With funding from the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) program, SARM contracted WSP Canada Inc. to investigate alternative solutions. WSP conducted an in-depth research phase and were not able to find any other crash tested barriers that were 680 mm in height that could be adopted.

In 2022, WSP was tasked with designing a barrier system at the minimum height, that would then be crash tested. It was determined that modification of the currently adopted barrier system and reducing the height to the minimum would provide the greatest benefits over other proposed designs. A major benefit would be that all the existing barriers could be retrofitted to the new design, if it passed its crash test.

Over the last two years, WSP has been working with the Midwest Roadside Safety Facility (MwRSF) of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to have them perform the crash tests on the proposed barrier. MwRSF is a leading research organization that conducts crash testing. One of their many achievements is the development of the Steel And Foam Energy Reduction (SAFER) Barrier that is used on high-speed oval race tracks, such as the ones used by NASCAR.

For a barricade to be considered crash tested, it requires two full-scale crash tests to evaluate the performance of the system. The first crash test was with a small car to maximize vehicle snag on a barricade post. The second test was with a pickup truck that would provide maximum loading to a splice location. Crash testing of the proposed barricade was performed by MwRSF in the spring of 2024.

It is expected that design of the newly crash tested low height barricades will be made available to all municipalities in 2025. SARM is looking forward to implementing the new barricade design on new bridge construction projects and being able to assist RMs with retrofitting their existing barricades to improve the use of the rural bridges by farmers.

**If you have any questions regarding the project, please feel free to contact Daniel Segal ([dsegal@sarm.ca](mailto:dsegal@sarm.ca)) or Alexander Udey ([auzey@sarm.ca](mailto:auzey@sarm.ca)).**

# AI IN AGRICULTURE



**BY BOB MOULDING,  
SARM DIVISION 1 DIRECTOR**

## **AI IN AGRICULTURE HAS A DIFFERENT MEANING FOR ME NOW THAN IT DID RAISING PUREBRED CATTLE.**

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) has been evident in the agricultural sector. Ag has been under pressure to maximize crop yield to feed the growing population of the world. According to the United Nations, food demand will increase by 70% by 2050. Ag is the bedrock of AI and the sustainability of our economy. Thus, it plays an integral part in long-term economic growth. Currently, ag serves as a source

of livelihood, improving GDP as a source of national trade and accounts for 6.4% of the global GDP. It is also the primary source of food.

The introduction of AI will enable other technological advances including data analytics, robotics, broadband, inexpensive sensors, cameras, and drone technology. By analyzing moisture and past crop information, AI systems will be able to provide data as to which crop to plan, and optimal seeding dates, thus improving crop yields and decreasing the use of water, fertilizer, and pesticides.

Agriculture will be transformed by this digital revolution which will improve efficiency, sustainability, inclusiveness, and transparency. Today, most new machines are operated by iPads or other smart technology that allows producers to seed, spray, and harvest with precision with no overlaps or waste of seed, to name a few modern technical applications. These, along with the technologies we use today, such as sectional control, guidance, and sprayer technology.



Timely delivery of maintenance was a major priority for the Agency in 2024, and SAMA delivered maintenance on time to 86.7% of our client municipalities.

In 2024, SAMA is also planning to complete 28,000 agricultural property reviews in 17 RMs. The Agency is also planning 24,700 residential/resort property reviews and 18,900 commercial, industrial, and industrial flowline/tank property reviews in both rural and urban municipalities.

2025 is a revaluation year. Values will be updated to reflect a new valuation base date of January 1, 2023. SAMA has started delivering preliminary values packages for the upcoming revaluation. Once you receive your package, please take the time to review the information and contact SAMA with any questions or concerns regarding the 2025 revaluation.

It is also time to start preparing for the 2025 assessment rolls. Please sign in to MySAMA to submit your maintenance requests for your 2025 roll. To sign up for MySAMA, please contact your local SAMA office.

For more information visit our website at [www.sama.sk.ca](http://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).



However, this will create various security challenges that remain to be solved.

When many resources are combined, security issues occur

such as privacy, preserving trust, and ensuring the resources are available to start with.

Most of us embrace new technology, but it does come with a significant increase in cyber attacks, as seen lately by large companies with high levels of protection with their technologies, customer personal information, and the general continuation of regular business. Companies that have recently experienced cyber attacks include Shoppers Drug Mart, Federated Co-Operatives Limited, RME, and health agencies in our province, to name a few.

There are many companies that are leading the way in AI, and there is one, local to me, that I would like to highlight.

Pattison Liquid Systems is located in SARM's division one and is a Saskatchewan based company leading the way with autonomous machinery through their Connect equipment on

the OMNI platform. This equipment can be used for seeding/fertilizing and spraying, with simple changing of attachments. The images included in this article provide examples of the Connect machinery in action. These machines not only provide precision accuracy but also allow for maximum efficiency by cutting down on time thanks to AI technology.

AI can be a valuable resource for the agricultural sector as the industry grows to meet global needs. As this technology evolves, so will the preventative measures to protect producers from potential cyber risks by using such technology. AI has advanced in so many ways since I was first introduced to it, and it continues to transform many industries to improve efficiency and sustainability.



# 2024 RMAA CONVENTION REPORT

MAY 13<sup>TH</sup> TO MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2024



**ATTENDANCE:  
395 INCLUDING  
ADMINISTRATORS,  
VISITORS AND  
GUESTS.**

CONVENTION REGISTRATION  
COURTESY OF SMHI

Convention began with the annual RMAA Golf Tournament on Monday at the Aspen Links Golf Club, sponsored by the 'Gang of Three' - ATS Traffic, Finning Canada and Prairie Steel, and the 'Admin on the Go' Tour to Stone Hall Castle, The Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Willows Restaurant and the Floral Conservatory.

Keynote speaker: Greg Johnson, Tornado Hunter - sponsored by SMHI

## **22 NEW MEMBERS PRESENT WERE INDUCTED INTO THE ASSOCIATION:**

Michelle Bednarz  
Leticia Bossence  
Jayden Boyd  
Shiloh Bronken  
Landon Chambers  
Madison Gardner

Kerry Hilts  
Michelle Klein  
Corie Lanceleve  
Annaleigh LeBruno  
Leah McIntosh  
Angela Molde

Sheila Noble  
Chantelle  
Ottenbreit  
Lisa Pahl  
Dawn Prince  
Tenie Schoettler

Nicole Shewchuk  
Sarah Stockdale  
Alicia Struck  
Quentin Wiebe  
Candice Zinn

Presentations were then made by the Rural Board of Examiners to administrators who attained advanced certification designation during the past year.

**CLASS 'A' CERTIFICATES:**

Amanda Baumgartner	RM of Golden West No. 95
Rebecca Carr	RM of Turtle River No. 469
Melinda Hammer	RM of Big Stick No. 141
Leanne Mack	RM of Vanscoy No. 345
Bradley Wiebe	RM of Sherwood No. 159



**ONE 25 YEAR MEMBER WAS RECOGNIZED AND PRESENTED WITH A PIN FOR THEIR LONG STANDING SERVICE TO LOCAL RURAL GOVERNMENT.**

Roxanne Empey	RM of Pinto Creek No. 75
---------------	--------------------------

**PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS WERE PRESENTED TO RMAA RETIRING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Christine Dyck	RM of Lost River No. 313
Terry Erdelyan	RM of Pittville No. 169
Glenda Giles	RM of Kindersley No. 290
Holley Odgers	RM of Coalfields No. 4
Mervin Schmidt	RM of Elcapo No. 154
Robin Busby	RM of Milton No. 292 and RM of Antelope Park No. 322

A Public Service Award was also presented to Cathy Ripplinger, former RMAA Division 2 Director.

**THE NEW EXECUTIVE OF THE RMAA FOR THE YEAR 2024-2025 IS AS FOLLOWS:**

President	Sheila Keisig, Balcarres
Vice-President	Michelle Buechler, Paynton
Immediate Past President	Guy Lagrandeur, Wilcox
Executive-Director	Rose Zimmer, Wolseley
Director Ex-Officio	Ray Orb, Cupar
Division 1	Amanda Baumgartner, Corning
Division 2	Carol Bellefeuille, Moose Jaw
Division 3	Raylene Packet, Richmond
Division 4	Kelly Rea, Arran
Division 5	R. Doran Scott, Bradwell
Division 6	Michelle Buechler, Paynton





# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

BY THE HONOURABLE TERRY JENSON,  
MINISTER OF SASKBUILDS AND PROCUREMENT

Our government is working hard to deliver infrastructure that supports classrooms, care and communities and meets the growing needs of Saskatchewan people.

Construction is ongoing across Saskatchewan communities as part of the government's all-time high investment of more than \$4.4 billion in capital projects. I'm pleased to share an update on the province's investment in vital capital projects across rural Saskatchewan.

## HEALTH CARE

Our government is working to expand health care infrastructure that serves Saskatchewan's northern communities. Major construction work is proceeding on the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital project with site and existing facility preparations ahead of the new tower construction.

The new tower will work with the existing Victoria Hospital, increasing capacity 40 per cent, from 173 to 242 inpatient beds. It features a heliport on the roof, an expanded emergency department, larger operating rooms, pediatrics, maternity, NICU, new medical imaging and a First Nations and Métis Cultural space, among other key services.

This project will provide people with improved, expanded acute care and mental health and addictions services closer to home, benefiting the growing population in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan for many years to come.

Furthermore, we are continuing to invest in providing residents across the northern part of our province who are in need of long-term care. Construction on the new La Ronge Long-Term Care Home Project is underway and will provide a safe and comfortable new space to live that will allow those in need to be closer to home and their families.

We are also working to deliver improved and expanded access to health services for residents in southern Saskatchewan communities, making new progress on projects in Weyburn, Estevan, and Watson.

The Weyburn General Hospital will include 35 inpatient beds including 10 dedicated to mental health, emergency medical services, a heliport and social work and foundation offices.

The new long-term care home in Watson will contain approximately 60 beds, an increase of 7 beds from the existing home. The new long-term care home in Estevan will contain approximately 167 beds, an increase of 59 beds from the existing home.

As announced in the 2024-25 Budget, planning work will begin for the Yorkton Regional Health Centre replacement,

St. Anthony's Hospital in Esterhazy, the Rosthern Hospital and the Battlefords District Care Centre. Our teams are working with local communities and the health sector to advance these projects.

## EDUCATION

Our government is dedicated to providing quality learning environments that foster growth and excellence in communities all across Saskatchewan. The renovation project for Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox was completed in October 2023. The Government of Saskatchewan invested approximately \$4 million in needed renovations and upgrades to the existing McCusker Hall, Carr Hall and Kennedy Hall. The completion of this project is crucial to the revitalization of this historic Grade 9 to 12 school.

Construction on the Ducharme Elementary School in La Loche has been progressing well towards its anticipated opening to students in fall 2025. The facility will be 5,548 square metres and accommodate approximately 475 students from prekindergarten to Grade 6.

Construction on the replacement and consolidation of the existing elementary and high school in Lanigan is progressing well. The project is expected to be open to students in fall 2025. This facility will feature labs for

Industrial Arts, Science, Home Economics and the Arts, as well as a large main gymnasium and a smaller secondary gym.

The Carlyle school project is advancing smoothly. The new school will accommodate up to 500 students from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 and will also include a 51-space childcare centre.

 **TOURISM**

Our government is also dedicated to making upgrades at our provincial parks to build new amenities and enhance existing spaces, to enhance the visitor experience for Saskatchewan people and those visiting our beautiful province.

Some important projects that have been completed or nearing completion include a new day-use pavilion for Rowan's Ravine;

new campground service centres at Blackstrap, Makwa Lake and Meadow Lake; a new visitor reception centre at Crooked Lake; the final phase of a campground development in Meadow Lake; major water system upgrades at Narrow Hills and Moose Mountain; major wastewater system improvements at The Battlefords and Echo Valley Provincial Parks; a boat launch replacement at Candle Lake; major road improvements at Makwa Lake; and ongoing improvements to washrooms, docks, day-use facilities and signage throughout the park system.

 **ECONOMY**

These investments will create job opportunities, stimulate economic activity and help ensure that Saskatchewan remains a desirable place to live, work and raise a family. Together, we are

building a legacy of important infrastructure that will positively impact our communities for years to come.

The Government of Saskatchewan actively supports Saskatchewan companies to thrive. In 2023-24, the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement was involved in awarding over 750 procurements valued at approximately \$991 million. Approximately 89.6 per cent of those procurements, valued at about \$888 million, were awarded to Saskatchewan-based companies.

**Our government remains committed to the Saskatchewan Growth Plan as we continue to support local companies and build critical infrastructure to support a growing province, a strong economy and a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people.**

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# MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (MLDP): HUMAN RESOURCE MODULE

Brian Schatz and Laurie-Anne Rusnak have been co-presenting the MLDP Human Resource Module for the past 10 years and the feedback provided to SARM in general has been very positive.

The main objective of the MLDP HR Module is to provide participants with information about challenges and opportunities of today's diverse and complex workplace. The course is a blend of classroom lectures where participants will hear about leading/best HR practices and then participate in group discussions on how they can, if they chose to, implement those practices in their own workplaces.

At every session there have been at least one or two attendees (either a member of Council or an Administrator) that are seeking advice and guidance in dealing with poor performing employees that have not met expectations. Often these poor performing employees have been with the municipality for an extended period of time and the municipality wants to terminate their employment without paying a huge severance. The key to successfully managing performance and expectations is outlined in the HR module. Participants learn the intricacies of the step-by-step process of corrective/ progressive discipline, so that your municipality can effectively

deal with and document each step setting out clear expectations and consequences if the performance does not improve to meet expectations on a sustained basis. Several case scenarios are worked through in the session so you leave feeling you can effectively deal with these problematic situations. It is always challenging to deal with these difficult employees, especially in small municipalities where everyone knows everyone, but the course covers how to do this in a respectful and professional manner. While challenging, it can





be extremely rewarding if after some constructive coaching an employee turns around and becomes a high or good performer OR, resigns from employment to seek other options because they see the writing on the wall and do not want to comply with or work to achieve the municipalities expectations.

Other portions of the HR Module identify how to effectively recruit and retain employees in a diverse multigenerational labour market. Effective and efficient communication in this day and age and understanding what employees really want in a multigenerational work force is essential. Given the current labour market employee retention is critical, especially if your municipality has and requires high performers or employees with specialized skills such as a qualified administrator, grader or heavy equipment operator, water and wastewater treatment/distribution certification, municipal accounting, etc. Understanding the needs and wants of your workforce and being able to communicate effectively is essential to employee retention which is highlighted in the HR Module.

While not always the hottest topic the session gives a very high-level, targeted review of the *Saskatchewan Employment Act* as it relates to municipalities. This review is foundational to municipal leadership and decision-making identifying when overtime should and should not be paid, what constitutes a layoff, what options are available to municipalities with respect to hours of work, vacation pay and schedules, etc.

Our biggest challenge is presenting the module in one day as the majority of attendees suggest that they would have liked more time covering certain topics of the HR Module.

**WE ENCOURAGE EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF COUNCIL, ADMINISTRATOR AND MANAGER TO ATTEND THIS SESSION AS WE BELIEVE THAT THE BENEFIT OF THE COURSE IS EXCEPTIONAL, AND YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.**

Brian was born and raised in small town Saskatchewan experiencing firsthand what it means to live and build community. After moving to the big city, he began and continues to apply that experience in his personal and professional life. His involvement with HR management/ consulting spans a career of more than 45 years in the public and private sector while also serving more than 20 years at the provincial level of a non-profit service organization and running a program for his Community Association for 35 years. Laurie-Anne has strong farming ties, community involvement and over 30 years experience working in municipal government as well as extensive experience working with other public and private sector employers. She has a Master of Arts Degree in Leadership and Training and her and Brian

achieved their Chartered Professional Human Resource Designations. Laurie-Anne and Brian enjoy supporting municipal organizations as HR consultants.

**BRIAN CAN BE REACHED AT 306-737-0233 OR BRIAN@SCHATZCONSULTING.NET AND LAURIE-ANNE CAN BE REACHED AT 306-621-9127 OR LADRHRCONSULTING@OUTLOOK.COM.**



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## SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT AID IS AVAILABLE FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS



Saskatchewan Student Aid helps thousands of Saskatchewan students access post-secondary education and training programs every year. The Saskatchewan Student Aid Fund has provided over \$2.2 billion in financial assistance to post-secondary students since its inception 75 years ago.

A variety of student aid programs are available to support students at every phase of their education journey. Students can choose the option(s) that fits their needs, including repayable and non-repayable supports.

### EXPLORE SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT AID PROGRAMS

Current and future post-secondary students can access Saskatchewan Student Aid programs to help pay for tuition, books, supplies, and living expenses. These supports include repayable student loans and non-repayable grants and scholarships.

#### **SASKATCHEWAN STUDENTS STARTING A PROGRAM ON OR AFTER AUGUST 1, 2024 CAN APPLY FOR 2024-25 SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT AID.**

Support is available specifically for students with dependants, low-income

students and students with disabilities. A new grant, the Saskatchewan Student Grant for Students with Dependants, will also now be available to eligible students beginning this year.

Post-secondary graduates in Saskatchewan can also benefit from supports such as tax credits and loan forgiveness programs.

Graduates who received student aid must start repaying their student loan six months after they complete their studies and can utilize flexible repayment options.

Students can apply for the Repayment Assistance Plan through the National Student Loan Service Centre.

**To learn more and  
apply for student aid, visit  
[saskatchewan.ca/student-aid](https://saskatchewan.ca/student-aid).**



**SASKATCHEWAN STUDENTS STARTING A PROGRAM ON OR AFTER AUGUST 1, 2024 CAN APPLY FOR 2024-25 SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT AID.**

## STUDENT LOANS

A student loan is borrowed money that must be paid back within a defined period. Student loans are available for full-time and part-time post-secondary students. Full-time students could receive up to \$13,900 per loan year (amount varies based on a student's program and individual circumstances).

### **Saskatchewan Student Loan Forgiveness for Nurses and Nurse Practitioners**

Recent nursing graduates who choose to work in rural areas of Saskatchewan for at least twelve consecutive months after graduation may be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in loan forgiveness on the provincial portion of their student loan.

### **Saskatchewan Student Loan Forgiveness for Veterinarians and Veterinary Technologists**

Recent veterinary graduates who choose to work in rural Saskatchewan or provide services to rural clients for at least one consecutive year after graduation may be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in loan forgiveness on the provincial portion of their student loan.

## GRANTS

A grant is money that does not need to be repaid. Full-time and part-time students can choose to receive both loans and grants, or grants-only funding when they apply for Saskatchewan Student Aid.

### **Canada and Saskatchewan Student Grants**

Students who apply for Saskatchewan Student Aid are automatically considered for full-time or part-time Canada and Saskatchewan student grants. Full-time students could receive up to \$5,200, part-time students could receive up to \$3,320, and students with disabilities could receive an additional \$2,800.

### **NEW Saskatchewan Student Grant for Students with Dependants**

Full-time students can receive up to \$950 annually per dependant in additional student aid funding. Dependants are children under the age of 12 or children over 12 with a permanent disability. Students will be automatically assessed for this grant when they apply for Saskatchewan Student Aid.

### **Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities may be eligible to receive up to \$22,000 per program year to purchase specialized education-related services and equipment.



**Saskatchewan graduates may be eligible to receive the Graduate Retention Program, which offers up to \$20,000 in tax credits to post-secondary students who live and work in Saskatchewan after graduation.**

## SCHOLARSHIPS

A scholarship is non-repayable funding that students can use towards their education expenses.

### **Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship**

The Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship provides eligible Saskatchewan grade 12 graduates attending a Saskatchewan post-secondary institution with \$750 per year up to a lifetime maximum of \$3,000. This scholarship is awarded based on financial need. Students are automatically assessed for the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship when they apply for student aid.

### **Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship**

The Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship program provides funding to students in a variety of fields where innovative work is being done. This scholarship is distributed by post-secondary institutions with half of the funds matched by government. This year, over \$6 million in scholarships are available to students through their institutions.

### **Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour**

The Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour recognizes Canadian Armed Forces members from Saskatchewan and their families by providing a one-time award of \$5,000.

### **Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor Scholarships**

The Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor Scholarship and The Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor Indigenous Scholarship each provide \$20,000 to eligible graduate and post-graduate students.

# SARM PROPERTY SELF-INSURANCE PROGRAM

## HELPFUL HINTS



**BY COLIN WARNECKE,  
MANAGER, RISK  
MANAGEMENT, SARM**

If your municipality participates in the SARM Property Self-Insurance Program (PSIP), this article is for you. By the time this is published, we will be getting close to starting the renewal cycle for PSIP. Part of the process involves council reviewing the PSIP Schedules to ensure the schedule reflects what the RM needs to insure and that the values are accurate. In what follows, we provide

some hints that we hope you find helpful as you review your RM's property coverage. Due to space restrictions, this article focuses on only some aspects of property insurance, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere. Please refer to the insurance package your office will receive in November for a tip sheet that expands on the information provided here.

### **BUILDINGS - CHANGES IN OCCUPANCY**

Please notify SARM if the use and/or occupancy of an insured building changes. This is especially important if a building is now used to store flowable materials (e.g. salt, sand, fly ash, or cement powder). Effective January 1, 2010, there is no coverage for damage caused by the pressure of flowable material on inside walls unless express permission for such building use has been granted by SARM.

### **BUILDINGS - REPLACEMENT COST COVERAGE LIMITS**

Construction costs continue to increase over time, and with these increases comes the risk of becoming underinsured. If your municipality is carrying replacement cost coverage on a building, ask yourself two questions: "What is the potential cost of rebuilding to the same size and quality, including PST?" and "What is the potential cost of cleaning up and hauling away debris from the destroyed building, including PST?" Ideally, your building limit should reflect at least the sum of these costs.

### **UNLICENSED MOBILE EQUIPMENT - REPLACEMENT COST COVERAGE LIMITS**

If your RM is carrying replacement cost coverage on an unlicensed mobile equipment item, ask yourself (or ask your dealer), "What is the potential cost

of replacing this machine with another one like it, but brand new, including PST?”. We believe you will find equipment costs have increased dramatically since COVID and that you are likely underinsured. The coverage limit should be at least this amount to ensure adequate coverage in the event of a total loss. Often, due to increasing prices, being adequately covered means requesting regular coverage limit increases.

## BELONGINGS STORED OUTDOORS

Does your RM store in-stock (i.e. uninstalled) culverts and signs outdoors? Does your RM own outdoor fuel tanks? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, and you haven’t already arranged coverage for these items, please contact Lisa Shordee at SARM (property@sarm.ca) to add these items.

## OPTIONAL COVERAGES

The program provides two optional coverages for those municipalities that wish to add them for an extra premium. They are:

### 1. Boiler and Machinery Endorsement.

This is meant to protect against two things. First is damage caused by the sudden and accidental mechanical or electrical breakdown of equipment such as boilers, compressors, fans, and pumps (but not unlicensed mobile equipment), subject to a \$1,000 deductible. Second, this coverage is meant to protect against the damage caused by the explosion of equipment operating under pressure at or exceeding 15 pounds per square inch, which is excluded under the basic policy. Terms and conditions apply; please contact Lisa Shordee for more information.

### 2. Commandeered Equipment Coverage.

This coverage is meant to protect the RM should you need to request assistance from a ratepayer during an emergency (i.e. grass fire) and their equipment becomes damaged. The coverage is Actual Cash Value in nature and is meant to be a second payor (meaning the ratepayer’s insurance is the primary coverage). However, there are times when coverage is not available or has not been purchased by the ratepayer. As such, SARM is able to provide up to \$1.5 million in coverage to RMs if this coverage is required.

**Please contact Lisa Shordee by phone at 761-3732 or by email at [property@sarm.ca](mailto:property@sarm.ca) if you have questions or need more information.**



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**REDHEAD EQUIPMENT**



# FLOW DEVICES TO REDUCE FLOODING FROM BEAVER DAMS



**BY CHELSEA NEUBERGER, AAG  
PLANT HEALTH TECHNICAL  
ADVISOR, SARM DIVISION 5**

The Beaver Control Program, administered by the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, includes a rebate for flow devices that are long-term humane management strategies for beaver control.

Rural municipalities and First Nation communities can utilize these long-term and conventional control methods to create an integrated management system for nuisance adult beaver control. Unlike the short-term controls of trapping, these flow solutions, beaver deceiver devices, and pond levelers provide a lasting, humane, and environmentally friendly answer to control this pest.

Beaver deceivers are ingenious devices designed to prevent beavers from obstructing culverts with their damming activities. These flow devices are particularly beneficial in rural municipalities and First Nations communities where beaver damming can lead to flooded roads. By installing beaver deceivers, the flow of water, through culverts is maintained, preventing beavers from plugging up culvert inlets and causing potential flooding.

These devices are typically constructed as culvert protection fences or caps, which effectively deter beavers from

damming in and against the culvert. Beaver deceivers work best in areas with significant water flow or where the water level is close to the road surface. Importantly, the design of beaver deceivers also allows for fish passage, maintaining the natural flow and ecosystem of the waterway. Overall, beaver deceivers serve as an effective and humane solution to mitigate the impact of beaver damming, helping to prevent road flooding.

Pond levelers are effective tools for managing water levels in bodies of water, especially in relation to beaver



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activity. By implementing a pond leveler, you can control water levels to prevent flooding and mitigate the impact of beaver dams. Pond levelers are designed to manage beaver damming by providing a controlled release of water that discourages beavers from creating dams. The pond leveler creates a permanent leak through the beaver dam that beavers cannot stop. Additionally, a wire fence surrounds the intake of the pond leveler pipe to prevent beavers from detecting water movement, thereby ensuring their

safety. As a result, the beavers do not attempt to clog the pipe and the controlled release of water helps prevent flooding while allowing the beavers to remain in the area. This approach offers a humane and effective way to manage water levels and discourage beaver damming

The benefits of pond levelers include preventing erosion caused by overflowing water, maintaining a stable water level, and supporting healthy aquatic ecosystems. Additionally, these devices can help mitigate the risk of property damage.

These devices offer a cost-effective, non-lethal, and sustainable humane approach to mitigate flooding problems due to adult nuisance beaver populations. These flow devices promote ecosystem stewardship, and municipalities save on costs of road repair, and culvert clearing and help maintain the integrity of at-risk infrastructure.

For more information on controlling nuisance adult beavers, the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) Beaver Control Program offers funding assistance for the cost of the use of pond-levelers and beaver deceiver devices as part of a long-term humane management plan. The program provides a rebate of up to 50% of the cost to \$500 maximum for the rebate of both devices. Additionally, applicants can get up to 50% to Rural Municipalities and First Nations for the cost of removal per adult nuisance beaver removed by licensed fur trappers. The program operates between February 16, 2024, and February 15, 2025.



*For more information on the Sustainable CAP Beaver Control Program, contact your SARM Plant Health Technical Advisor, scan the QR code or visit the SARM website at <https://sarm.ca/programs/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership/beaver-control-program/>.*



# THE CRUCIAL PILLARS OF RURAL SASKATCHEWAN

HEALTH CARE,  
INFRASTRUCTURE,  
AGRICULTURE,  
AND POLICING



BY BRIAN RAKOCHY,  
MANAGER, ADVOCACY, SARM

Our vast landscape and tight-knit communities embody a way of life deeply rooted in the land and people of rural Saskatchewan. Across this great province, several key elements form the backbone of rural livelihoods and prosperity: health care, infrastructure, agriculture, and policing. These pillars not only sustain daily life but also play vital roles in shaping the future of these communities. These will be the focus of our organization during the upcoming provincial election season.

**In the next few months leading up to the Saskatchewan provincial election, SARM will be laying out what we see as the priorities for the future in rural Saskatchewan and our member RMs.**

## 1 HEALTH CARE Ensuring Well-being and Accessibility

Access to health care services is fundamental to the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan. With the challenges of distance and limited resources, rural communities rely on local health care facilities to provide essential medical care. These facilities not only serve as primary points of contact for routine check-ups but also as critical hubs during emergencies.

Moreover, health care in rural areas extends beyond hospitals and clinics. It includes outreach programs, home care services, and mental health support, addressing the diverse needs of residents. The presence of well-equipped medical professionals and facilities is not just a convenience but a lifeline that ensures the well-being of families and individuals across the province.

## 2 INFRASTRUCTURE Connecting Communities and Driving Development

Infrastructure forms the physical framework that connects rural Saskatchewan to the broader world. Roads, bridges, and reliable internet access are not just conveniences but essential arteries of economic development and social connectivity. Well-maintained infrastructure facilitates the movement of goods, services, and people, enabling businesses to thrive and communities to grow.





Investments in infrastructure also support education and recreation, linking rural schools to global knowledge networks and ensuring that local talents have the tools they need to succeed. By bolstering infrastructure, Saskatchewan's rural areas can harness their potential for sustainable growth and resilience in an increasingly interconnected world.

3

## AGRICULTURE

### Nurturing the Heart of Rural Economy

Agriculture is the lifeblood of rural Saskatchewan, deeply embedded in its heritage and future. The province's fertile soils and favourable climate support a vibrant agricultural sector, producing a bounty of crops and sustaining livestock operations. Beyond its economic significance, agriculture shapes the cultural identity of rural communities, fostering traditions of hard work, innovation, and stewardship of the land.

Efforts to support agriculture in Saskatchewan extend to research and development, ensuring that farmers have access to cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices. This commitment not only enhances productivity but also promotes environmental stewardship, safeguarding the natural resources on which rural livelihoods depend.

4

## POLICING

### Upholding Safety and Security

Ensuring public safety is a cornerstone of community well-being in rural Saskatchewan. Policing services play a crucial role in maintaining law and order, responding to emergencies, and safeguarding residents from crime. The presence of dedicated law enforcement personnel ensures that rural communities can thrive in a secure environment, where families feel safe and businesses can operate without fear.

Moreover, rural policing initiatives foster trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local residents. By building strong relationships and understanding local concerns, police officers become integral members of the communities they serve, working together to address challenges and promote a sense of unity and resilience.

## CONCLUSION

### Sustaining Rural Saskatchewan's Future

In conclusion, health care, infrastructure, agriculture, and policing are not merely isolated components but interconnected pillars that sustain the vibrant tapestry of rural Saskatchewan. Each plays a vital role in ensuring the well-being, prosperity, and security of communities across the province. By investing in these essential areas, Saskatchewan can build a resilient future where rural life continues to thrive, grounded in a strong sense of community and a shared commitment to progress.

As SARM looks to the future in Saskatchewan, nurturing these pillars will be essential to preserving our rich heritage, empowering our people, and embracing opportunities for growth in an ever-evolving world. Through collective effort and thoughtful planning, the province can continue to be a beacon of strength and resilience, embodying the spirit of unity and progress that defines its rural heartland.

**It is with these pillars in mind that SARM will be pushing all political parties in Saskatchewan to form their policy priorities and we hope you will keep them in mind when politicians come knocking this fall.**

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Saskatchewan

# WINNING PRACTICES:

## SASKATCHEWAN MUNICIPAL AWARD WINNERS



The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards (SMA's) celebrate the excellent and innovative practices of Saskatchewan's municipal governments. The awards program is a partnership between the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association (RMAA), the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan (UMAAS), the Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities, and the provincial ministry of Government Relations.

Four innovative projects from five municipalities are being recognized for the 17th Annual SMA's. This year's winners have shown excellence in municipal infrastructure, cooperation, and addressing community needs. The award presentations took place at the SARM and SUMA Conventions this spring.

### The selection committee was made up of:

- **Keith Comstock**, Executive in Residence at the Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy
- **Malcolm Eaton**, former Mayor of Humboldt and former Vice-President of Cities for SUMA
- **Wendy Gowda**, Municipal Advisor, former Administrator for the RM of LeRoy No. 339 and Past President of RMAA

- **Harvey Malanowich**, Reeve of RM of Sliding Hills No. 273 and former SARM Board Member
- **Jim Toye**, former City Manager for the City of Prince Albert
- **Loretta Young**, former administrator for the RM of Longlaketon No. 219 and the Village of Earl Grey

Selection committee members noted that the winning projects reflected the needs of their respective municipalities and addressed municipal infrastructure.



### TOP RURAL MUNICIPAL INITIATIVE

#### **The Junction** (RM of Prince Albert No. 461)

Creation of a municipal centre that encompasses the RM shop and office, and is equipped to become the RM Emergency Response Center. The centre offers meeting space and amenities, and the area is expanding with multiple enterprises emerging in their design phases.

### TOP MUNICIPAL INITIATIVE

#### **New Mechanical Wastewater Treatment Facility** (City of Lloydminster)

Creation of a new multi-jurisdictional, bi-provincial wastewater treatment plant requiring collaboration from leaders in all levels of government. Resulting in improved quality of treated effluent entering the North Saskatchewan River and achieving a fair agreement that benefited residents of both Alberta and Saskatchewan residents.

### TOP URBAN MUNICIPAL INITIATIVE

#### **Southland Co-op Centre** (Town of Assiniboia)

Replacement of the old rink with a new state of the art recreation facility that supports the health and wellness of the community and has increased tourism to the area. The centre contains a walking track, NHL sized ice surface, Multi Purpose Gym, Climbing Walls, Simulator room, and more.



**REGIONAL COOPERATION:**

**Outlook-Rudy Joint Protective Services**

(Town of Outlook and RM of Rudy No. 284)

The Town of Outlook and the RM of Rudy No. 284 worked together to address concerns raised over the long term viability of fire and rescue services by addressing a need to repair relationships within the region.

Projects supported the community's infrastructure including the creation and upgrading of municipal buildings. You can see all the details on the winning projects, including videos with project and community leaders talking about their projects, on the SMA website at [www.municipalawards.ca](http://www.municipalawards.ca).

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS! WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING ABOUT THE GREAT WORK IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY WHEN NOMINATIONS FOR THE 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SASKATCHEWAN MUNICIPAL AWARDS OPEN ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2024!**



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**Doug**



# CALL SARM FOR PROCUREMENT ADVICE

BY SARM MEMBER PURCHASING

The last time we met the RM of Fantasyland No. 777 they had a massive conflict over the purchase of a grader—largely caused by unclear roles and responsibility that could have been set out in a procurement policy. The RM eventually got through their issues, and the resentments that came out of “grader-gate” were pushed back below the surface. Now they face a new procurement challenge. This time, the RM needs to apply gravel to some of their roads. The problem is, the RM doesn’t have the capacity or capability to get the gravel into their RM themselves. Gun-shy from the last procurement disaster, Administrator Phil has made the procurement of gravel hauling an agenda item to discuss at the upcoming council meeting.

The routine business of the council meeting starts out peacefully enough. When they get to the gravel hauling agenda item, Administrator Phil explains

the need for gravel on the specified roads, and everyone nods in agreement. On this they were united: they’ve got to take care of the roads used by their rate payers and industry. However, when Phil asked the group who they wanted to use to haul the gravel, things took a turn for the worse (again!).

Immediately, Councillor Bob pipes up to say that he “knows a guy” who does gravel hauling on the side of his farming operation in a neighbouring RM and that he could surely get a “really good deal.” “Plus,” Bob remarks, “we want to keep RM money local.”

Before Councillor Bob could finish his sentence, Councillor Jane cuts him off and pronounces that all purchases by a public entity absolutely MUST be acquired through a public procurement process. “There are certain thresholds that determine the requirements that absolutely must be met to ensure trade compliance.” Everyone at the council table rolls their eyes.

“That’s ridiculous,” retorts Councillor Bob. “We should be able to go to whoever we want, whenever we want, for whatever we want. That’s what I do in my farming business, so that’s what I want to do here. And if you think we’re going to go to tender and get some company from another province that undercuts everybody local just to get the work, you’ve got another thing coming!”

Councillor Jane slumps in her chair and quietly calculates the number of months until the next election when Bob could be voted out. Councillor Jerry, however, pipes up to remind them that sometimes the lowest price isn’t always the best anyway. Maybe they should be thinking of other factors beyond price—things like schedule and the past performance of the suppliers. “If we care about getting the best value and not just the best price, maybe we should do an RFP, rather than a tender. Or maybe we could get away with just getting quotes from

different companies in the area, rather than having to post it publicly and go through all the rigmarole.”

“RFP! RFQ! R2D2! None of this trade compliance stuff makes any sense to me! I just want to go to our usual guy and do what we’ve always done,” exclaims Councillor Bob.

Rallying her energy with renewed resolve, Councillor Jane jumps in: “It’s not JUST about trade regulations. If we don’t see who else could do the job, how do we know our usual guy can give us the best price? I thought you were a good capitalist, Bob?” Now it was Bob’s turn to roll his eyes.

Administrator Phil puts up his hand. After Reeve Jerry acknowledges him, he explains, “Doesn’t who we go with for

gravel hauling need to consider whether or not we want them to spread the gravel and whether the company would do the crushing too? We probably need to figure out the full scope of work we’re trying to accomplish with this all.” To Phil’s surprise, everyone nods in agreement again—except for Councillor Bob, who stares straight ahead, red in the face, with one blood vessel on his forehead throbbing.

After some awkward silence, Reeve Jerry clears his throat and tries to bring the discussion back under control. “I remember a session with SARM where they talked about having a Procurement Advisor on staff who knows the ins and outs of this kind of thing. They said she could help us figure out stuff like this. Phil, how do we get in touch with SARM to help us?”

After going to the SARM website on his laptop, Administrator Phil replies: “It says here we can call the SARM Procurement Advisor at (306) 761-3722 or email Amanda Kozak at akozak@sarm.ca. Amanda can provide ‘coaching, advice, and guidance’ on how RMs can procure the goods and services they need in a way that is ‘efficient’ and ‘trade compliant.’”

“Let’s hope so. I don’t know how much of this I can take,” reflects Reeve Jerry as much to himself as to the rest of council.

**Don’t live in Fantasyland; contact SARM for procurement advice.**

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# DIGGING INTO SASK 1ST CALL'S HISTORY ONE YEAR AFTER SASKATCHEWAN COMMON GROUND ALLIANCE (SCGA) TRANSFER

## A new day has dawned in the Saskatchewan digging community!

It has been one year since the Saskatchewan Common Ground Alliance (SCGA) took over operations of Sask 1st Call, but the history of this important service began over two decades ago.

On January 2, 2003, SaskEnergy launched the organization with its familiar "Call Before You Dig" messaging.

"There were notification companies in other provinces like Ontario and Alberta. Companies that crossed over borders really saw the value in having a notification service in Saskatchewan, too," says Shawn Fairman - General Manager, Distribution Customer Services, and Vice-President of the new Sask 1st Call Board of Directors.

"It made sense for SaskEnergy to be a part of it because we have a lot of underground infrastructure and because safety is a core value for our company."

In any given year, damage to buried cables, wires and pipeline due to excavation activities is estimated to cost up to \$1 billion

in Canada. Sask 1st Call enhances safety for people and businesses doing construction in Saskatchewan. Anyone can request a line locate free of charge, either by calling a 1-800 phone number, or submitting a request online, and within three business days any underground infrastructure will be marked using flags, stakes, or paint. If an area is marked, this is a clear signal to not dig in or obstruct the area.

Likewise, Sask 1st Call is a beneficial service for subscribing companies that have underground facilities, helping ensure those facilities are protected.

"Sask 1st Call enables dependable, cost-effective communication between subscribers and those intending to disturb the ground," says Shannon Doka - Executive Director, SCGA. "This service greatly enhances public safety, as many facilities may exist underground that landowners are unaware of."

With this mission of safety for both users and subscribers, Sask 1st Call has grown over the years. It began when SaskEnergy saw the need as underground facilities continued to grow in complexity and worked to build the organization throughout 2002.

When it launched eight months later, Sask 1st Call had just two registered member companies – SaskEnergy and TransGas. Others quickly joined and, today, Sask 1st Call has more than 120 subscriber companies!

In the early years, “Call Before You Dig” was the primary option for Sask 1st Call. However, people could also request a locate by fax machine!

In August 2004, online requests became an option. That year, there were more than 97,000 online locates requested and the service had grown to include twenty subscriber companies.

Since then, online requests have become the best practice, with 147,155 in 2023, and the accuracy of the maps included tends to be higher, though users can still phone in their locate requests.

In the past few months, improvements to both the Sask 1st Call website ([www.sask1stcall.com](http://www.sask1stcall.com)) and the Before You Dig Partners website ([www.onecall.beforeyoudigpartners.com](http://www.onecall.beforeyoudigpartners.com)) have been completed.

“We try to make it as easy as possible and promote the online requests instead of calling in. We have found that far fewer incidents happen when requests are made online instead of by phone,” says Shawn.

Twenty years after it was launched, Sask 1st Call introduced a change to make things more efficient and convenient for customers and subscribers: The line locate expiry date was extended from 10 business days to 30 calendar days. This change aligns Saskatchewan with other provinces and jurisdictions that already had a 30-day window for line locates.

“All parties agree this change will safely help deal with the unexpected, such as weather-related delays, equipment breakdown and needed crew downtime,” says Shannon.

Yes, it has been a busy and exciting time for the digging community since the June 2023 transfer.

“The SCGA is a good fit to oversee the service”, adds Shawn, “as a non-profit organization that shares SaskEnergy’s dedication to public safety, environmental protection and damage prevention”.

SCGA is a member driven not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring worker and public safety, environmental protection and the integrity of services by promoting effective damage prevention practices in connection with underground and overhead infrastructure activities.

As a newly formed non-profit corporation, Sask 1st Call now has a Board of Directors – appointed by the SCGA – to provide strategic direction to the business and governance.

# Call Before You Dig

*Just to be safe.*

## Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call

Give us two working days notice and we’ll mark the underground lines for you **FREE** of charge.

Call or submit your request online today.

**1-866-828-4888**

[sask1stcall.com](http://sask1stcall.com)



**SaskEnergy SaskTel SaskPower TransGas**

Since the transfer, the membership of SCGA has grown to over 100 members, and new subscribers continue to join Sask 1st Call every month.

In addition to the new board, Sask 1st Call has a new Director to manage the service and day-to-day operations. Lisa Kosolofski started in this role in October.

“Lisa brings a lot of experience to promote and provide customer service to Sask 1st Call users and subscribers,” says Shannon. “The SCGA and Sask 1st Call are looking forward to what the next 20 years will bring!”

**For more information go to:**

**Sask 1st Call, visit [www.sask1stcall.com](http://www.sask1stcall.com) or email [firstcalldirector@scga.ca](mailto:firstcalldirector@scga.ca).**

**SCGA, visit [www.scga.ca](http://www.scga.ca) or email [executivedirector@scga.ca](mailto:executivedirector@scga.ca).**

# There are two distinct groups within the Risk Management Group:

- Benefits & Insurance
- Legal

## Getting to know SARM

# Risk Management (Legal, Benefits & Insurance)



**Colin Warnecke**  
Manager, Risk Management



**Mike Morris**  
General Council



**Adryan Toth**  
Senior Legal Counsel



**Danielle Schindelka**  
Senior Legal Counsel



**Teresa Edwards**  
Legal Assistant



**Jodi Hughes**  
Employee Benefits Administrator



**Lisa Shordee**  
Insurance Program Administrator

**The Benefits & Insurance Department provides** the Liability, Property, Group Benefits, and Fidelity Bond Insurance products to the membership. These include a suite of coverages tailored to the needs of member RM's through the following programs: The SARM Benefits Plan, Long-Term Disability, Extended Health and Dental, Group and Optional Life insurance, the SARM Fidelity Bond Self-Insurance Plan, the SARM Liability Self-Insurance Plan, and the SARM Property Self-Insurance Plan.

The underwriting, claims handling, and advice comes along with the services provided.

**The Legal Department's primary role** is to defend claims that are brought against any of the insurance plans provided. As a secondary service, legal advice is provided to the membership on a paid fee basis per service provided.

In the first half of 2023 over 90 RMs utilized this service.





# MEMBER NEWS

## IN MEMORIAM



**LINDSAY VAN  
ZANDBERGEN  
RM OF LOREBURN  
NO. 254  
IN MEMORIAM**

Sadly we announce the passing of Lindsay van Zandbergen on Sunday July 2, 2023 at the age of 78 years. Lindsay was passionate about farming and sports. He had a great love of animals. He spent his whole life on the farm at Loreburn, until his health started to fail and he had to move to Lucky Lake. Lindsey is survived by his wife Linda of 52 years.

He served as councillor for Division 3 from 1975 - 1992. We are grateful for the time he committed to our community. ▢



**TED MYSLICKI  
RM OF MOOSE RANGE  
NO. 486  
IN MEMORIAM**

Ted was born May 14, 1940 in Beausejour, Manitoba. He was raised on the family farm and developed a love of animals and all things outdoors. He went to work at age 17 for Canada Packers in Winnipeg where he stayed for 10 years.

He met Roselie (nee Labelle) in 1960 and they married on August 20, 1966. They moved to Carrot River in the spring of 1967 to begin farming in Battle Heights. He was a member of the Catholic Church and a 4th Degree for the Knights of Columbus. He went to work for Case in Nipawin in 1982, and then got on with the RM of Moose Range in 1985 as a mechanic and trucker where he remained until he retired in 2005. Ted was very dedicated as an employee with strong work ethics. His retirement was a source of pride at having completed a job well done.

After his retirement he still wanted to see what was going on so he became councillor. Ted was Division 2 Councillor from November 2009 to October 2018 for the RM of Moose Range No. 486. He was actively involved as councillor and ensured his projects were completed.

During his retirement he made sure he made time to live his dream of camping and fishing and spending time with family and friends.

He is survived by his wife Roselie and their 3 daughters Kimberly (Barry), Debbie, and Crystal.

Ted passed away peacefully April 4 with his family by his side. ▢

**IN MEMORIAM**



**CORNELIUS (CORNIE) MARTENS**  
RM OF LAC PELLETIER NO. 107  
**IN MEMORIAM**

Cornie was born April 24, 1940 to Jacob and Marie Martens in Blumenort, SK. He was the fifth of nine children.

Cornie married Constance (Connie) Winslow on May 20, 1967 and started grain and cattle farming at their Cedar Hill farm, 40 km south of the City of Swift Current.

Together they had two children: Darrin Martens and Christine Martens.

Cornie's greatest achievement was his long service to the RM of Lac Pelletier No. 107. He sat on many boards and committees throughout his years on the Municipal Council.

After retiring from Municipal Politics, Cornie and Connie moved to Fort MacLeod, Alberta so they could be closer to family. □

**RETIREMENT**



**YVONNE (BONNY) GOODSMAN**  
RM OF BIG ARM, ARM RIVER, & WILLNER NO. 251, 252, & 253  
**RETIREMENT**

The RMs of Big Arm No. 251, Arm River No. 252, and Willner No. 253 would like to recognize Yvonne (Bonny) Goodsmann for her years of service as Administrator and congratulate her on her retirement.

Bonny began her career as Administrator with the RM of Big Arm No. 251 in April of 2001 and then in November 2009, also became the Administrator for both the RM of Arm River No. 252 and the RM of Willner No. 253. Bonny continued as the Administrator for all three RMs until her retirement on April 5, 2024.

Bonny has her PBA designation as well as the Superior A Certification for Administrators and was always up for attending an RMAA meeting or SARM convention to gain more knowledge. Bonny will be missed by the council and staff of all three RMs and we send much appreciation to her for all she brought to our Municipalities.

We wish Bonny the best as she begins this well-deserved new chapter of her life. □

## Member News Submission Tips:

- Submit photos as separate JPG, PNG, TIFF or PDF files.
- Submit 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.

**THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR STORIES WITH US!**

Send in submissions using the online form at <https://sarm.ca/events/awards-and-recognition/submissions/>



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