

RURAL COUNCILLOR

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know Laurel,
SARM's new
Executive
Director*

*New look
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PUBLISHER

Jared Tabler

EDITOR

Amy Roettger

ART DIRECTOR

Cindy Biglin

AUDIENCE, ANALYTICS & SOCIAL

Adam Brougham

ADVERTISING

Carmen Hrynchuk

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2301 Windsor Park Road
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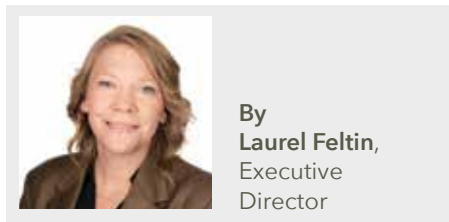
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Our Mission: To foster rural development in Saskatchewan and build strong, sustainable communities.



REFLECTING ON LEADERSHIP IN 2025



By
Laurel Feltn,
Executive
Director

As 2024 fades into the rearview mirror and 2025 stretches ahead, I find myself in a reflective mood—particularly as I step into my new role as the Executive Director of SARM. This transition marks not only a new professional chapter but also an opportunity to look inward and give some thought to what kind of leader I aspire to be in the year ahead.

Leadership has always been a multifaceted responsibility, and in this new role, I'll be called upon to provide guidance to not just the talented SARM team but also our dedicated board and members. As I step into this position, I am acutely aware that others may look to me as an example of effective leadership, a responsibility I take to heart.

Reflecting on my 20 years at SARM, I am grateful for the great leaders I've had the

privilege of working with. Their guidance has shaped my understanding of what it means to lead—not just in title, but in action. I have learned that leadership requires mindfulness—a constant awareness of how your behaviour, words, and decisions affect those around you. It's a lesson I carry with me into 2025.

Leadership isn't limited to boardrooms or high-level meetings. Whether you're leading a team at work, participating in a council discussion, or even facilitating conversations at the family dinner table, people are always watching. And, whether we realize it or not, they're learning from us—mimicking our behaviour, our actions, and the words we say. This makes it even more important to be a mindful leader—someone who consistently walks the talk.

“Leadership is about more than directing others; it's about inspiring them.”

For example, if you tell your staff that it's okay to make mistakes and learn from them, but then you're overly self-critical when you make a mistake yourself, your words ring hollow. If you encourage participation in a meeting but fail to actively invite contributions from

everyone at the table, the message you're sending is one of exclusion, not inclusion.

As I enter 2025, I am going into this year with a heightened sense of awareness about the impact my leadership can have on those I lead. It's essential to recognize that every action, every word, and every decision carries weight. And, given that I have two teenagers at home who are watching me as well, I'm even more committed to being the leader I would want them to see.

Leadership is about more than directing others; it's about inspiring them. It's about creating an environment where everyone feels heard, valued, and empowered to do their best. In 2025, I aim to be a leader who leads with integrity, mindfulness, and empathy—someone who doesn't just talk about values but demonstrates them in everyday actions.

To all the leaders out there—whether in small communities or large organizations—may 2025 be a year filled with growth, inspiration, and meaningful impact. Together, let's continue to lead by example, knowing that our actions resonate far beyond what we may realize.

Here's to a successful and inspiring 2025!

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STEPPING UP & MAKING HISTORY

A CHAT WITH SARM'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAUREL FELTIN

By Carmen Hrynchuk, Features Writer

Momentum. It's easy to lose and almost impossible to fake. Just ask Laurel Feltin. Not only is she SARM's new Executive Director, she's also the first woman to hold that title in SARM's 120-year history. And that's an honour she couldn't be more proud of. As you'll soon discover, stepping up and getting to work are two things Feltin has never shied away from. That can-do attitude is something she says is everywhere in rural Saskatchewan. And to her, being part of that feels even better than making history. Meet Laurel Feltin...



Tell us about your connection to rural Saskatchewan and what keeps you living and working there.


I actually grew up in Moose Jaw, but my family roots are in Scout Lake/Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, where much of my dad's family still lives, farms, and works. I grew up spending a lot of time in that area picking Saskatoon berries and going to fall suppers and family gatherings. So I just love that stuff and always have. We even just had a family reunion there a few summers ago at a family-run greenhouse on someone's property.

Today, however, I live in the RM of Edenwold/White City area just outside of Regina, which has been a perfect fit. When you live in a smaller place, you really get to know your neighbours and bond with people—those true connections where you feel like you have each other's backs. Rural Saskatchewan is all about that, and that's why I love it here.

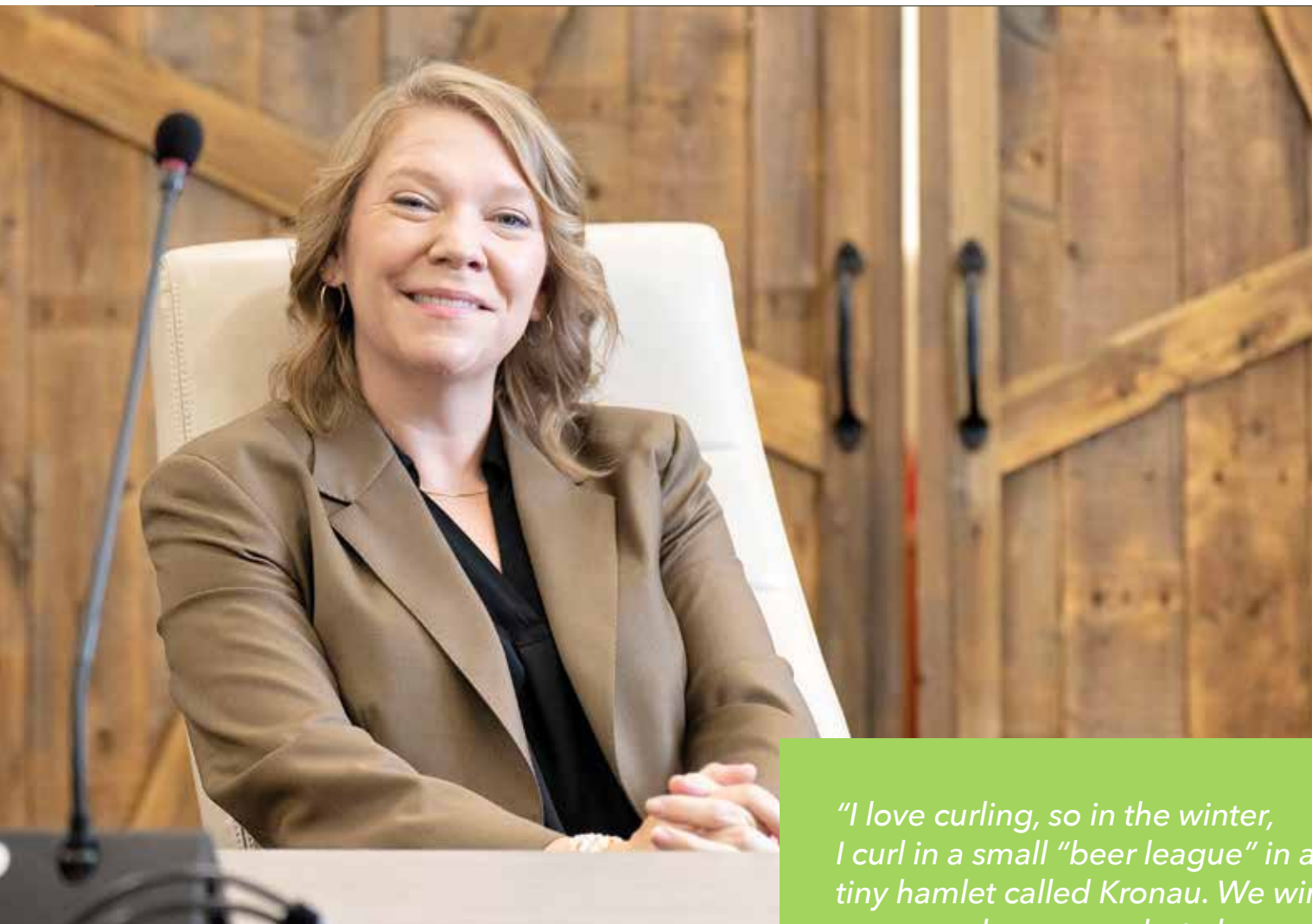
How did you get your start at SARM, and what it was about the organization that made you feel like you might belong there?

I was hired at SARM in April of 2004 to fill a maternity leave. I think they had me start about four weeks before the person was leaving so that the two of us would have a month-long transition. Anyway, as it turned out, we spent all of one day together before she went into premature labour. She and the baby were both fine, but her sudden departure meant me having to get on a plane alone to fly to a meeting we were supposed to attend together. And here's the thing: at 20-something years old, I had never flown anywhere in my life! Needless to say, I'll never forget going to that airport and having to get on that plane by myself. And though you'd never have convinced me of it in the moment, looking back, being thrown in headfirst was the best way to learn.

As for what made SARM feel like a place where I belonged? It was the staff and board, yes. But I would say what draws me most to this role are the members. Rural Saskatchewan people have that can-do attitude. They're the ones who volunteer. They're the ones who step up to get things done. And I LOVE that.



"Rural Saskatchewan people have that can-do attitude. They're the ones who volunteer. They're the ones who step up to get things done. And I LOVE that."



"I love curling, so in the winter, I curl in a small "beer league" in a tiny hamlet called Kronau. We win some, we lose some, but always have so much fun."

What has working with SARM taught you about yourself?

The importance of stepping up. I've been here 20 years, so jumping in and taking on new roles has been a constant. For example, when SARM was developing a road network, I literally got in a car with one of our board members and drove all across rural Saskatchewan, meeting with RMs to strategically pick roads that would make sense for industry to travel. Did I know how to design a road network? No! But it needed to be done, so I did it—and it was one of the best experiences I've ever had.

It's the same now with me becoming Executive Director. It was, of course, a goal of mine, but someone also had to step up and want to do the work. So even though I'm not an expert in everything, I'm not afraid to step up because that's what working here has taught me. You don't have to know everything, but you do have to be willing to ask for help. And that's not difficult when I'm surrounded by so many great people.

What's something you're sure of most days? And what's something you're still learning?

I'm sure that I have all the people I need surrounding me to do what I need to do. I'm sure of that. Even though some days I get up and might have that little bit of imposter syndrome, I just have to remind myself to reach out and it'll all be fine. Simple things like having a conversation with someone or asking that question that's bugging me. So that's what I'm sure of: that I really have built a network of people, staff, and board members who are there to support me and help me succeed. And that's a great feeling.

What am I still learning? To delegate. When I started in 2004, I was pretty much the lone staff member in a Policy Department

of one. So I did everything. I was running a rat-control grant program, designing a Clearing the Path Corridor System, doing the regular policy work, and generally taking on all the things. So delegating is something I've really had to work on since taking on director roles. I'm very mindful of this though, and have had great coaches who have taught me to end every day by asking myself this question: What did you delegate today? If I can name two things, great. If I can't, then I ask myself: Why didn't you? Just reviewing that every day is an enormous help.

When you're taking a break, what will we likely find you doing?

So many things! I love curling, so in the winter, I curl in a small "beer league" in a tiny hamlet called Kronau. We win some, we lose some, but always have so much fun.

I also love watching sports, along with my dad, who's been a huge sports fan forever. So if a Blue Jays or Riders game is on, we're watching. My sisters watch those same sports too, so it's just a great family activity. My kids, however, aren't as passionate about these things, but that's okay. Maybe that will come...

I also really love to crochet because there's something about using my hands that's amazing at keeping me feeling grounded. The same goes for gardening. The other thing I've recently discovered and am really feeling the benefits of is yoga.

In what ways do you hope to grow this year, both personally and professionally?

My personal goal ties back to yoga, which I'm pretty new to. I started back in August of 2024 but have already noticed the benefits of stretching and breathwork. What I'd really like to hone in on though is the meditation part. It's definitely a big goal, but I think it will help me in every aspect of my life—work and home.

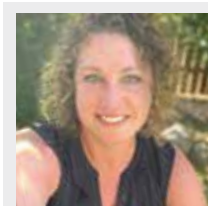
Professionally, I really want my focus this year to be on building relationships. Yes, I've been at SARM for 20 years, but I don't pretend to know what I don't know. So my goal is to listen and learn. For example, that means you're going to see me walking around at conventions, shaking hands, and asking members questions about what really matters to



them. Because, yes, we get resolutions, but that's not the same as getting a chance to touch base and find out what really matters to people at home. So that's my goal this year—listening, learning, and building relationships. I can't imagine time more well spent.

LEADERSHIP ON COUNCIL

Develop a Code of Ethics Bylaw and *Let It Be Your Guide*



By
**Raylene
Checkley,**
RMAA Division
3 Director

Leadership on council, what does that look like? What should that look like? Let's start by defining leadership in general. The ability of an individual, group, or organization to lead, influence, or guide other individuals, teams, or organizations. How does this translate to leadership on council? As a council, if you have developed a *Code of Ethics Bylaw*, this should be already laid out and at your fingertips. A *Code of Ethics Bylaw* provides a framework for council to successfully lead their community.



What Is an Effective Leader?

First, let's discuss what exactly a leader is. There are many different types of leaders. Some are easily spotted and dedicated to their roles; they give advice and take charge of situations. Others are less obvious; they are quiet and diligent and calmly handle situations as they arise. Think of the people who lead in your community. You may quickly think of the leaders who are front and centre but are you overlooking others who lead in a different, quieter way? Leadership can be as simple as someone "spearheading" an idea and running with it to see if it takes off.

A good leader embodies a range of qualities that help them inspire and guide others effectively. A decisive, trustworthy leader empowers their team through clear communication and resilience. However, leadership is not limited to these traits alone; it extends to characteristics like motivation, inspiration, vision, confidence, and integrity. Strong leaders also display courage, respect, compassion, determination, and self-awareness, among others.



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How Can a Code of Ethics Bylaw Help?

Now let's talk about a *Code of Ethics Bylaw* and the guidance it provides to council on leadership. It is recommended that the bylaw your council develops includes ethical standards for council to follow while fulfilling their legislative obligations as elected officials. And I believe, if council adopts these standards and values then keeps them top of mind, each councillor will contribute to the leadership of a strong and diligent governing body.

- **Honesty** - be truthful and open in your role as a council member and as a member of the community you serve.
- **Objectivity** - make decisions carefully, fairly, and impartially.
- **Respect** - treat every person with dignity, understanding, and respect; do not engage in discrimination, bullying, or harassment.
- **Transparency and Accountability** - endeavour to conduct and convey council business and all your duties in an open and transparent manner, other than those discussions that are authorized to be dealt with in a confidential manner in a closed session.
- **Confidentiality** - refrain from disclosing or releasing any confidential information.
- **Leadership and the Public Interest** - serve your constituents in a conscientious and diligent manner and act in the best interests of the RM; strive, by focussing on

issues important to the community and demonstrating leadership, to build and inspire the public's trust and confidence in local government; perform your duties in a manner that will bear close public scrutiny and will not provide the potential or opportunity for personal benefit, wrongdoing, or unethical conduct.

- **Responsibility** - act responsibly and in accordance with *The Acts of Parliament of Canada* and *The Legislature of Saskatchewan*; disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest, you are individually responsible for preventing potential and actual conflicts of interest.

Whether you serve as the reeve or a councillor for the RM, you are a leader in your elected right. The reeve presides over the meetings while leading through the agenda items with the team of councillors at the council table. Each member of council, the team, has the elected privilege to engage, discuss, and make decisions on what is best for their rural municipality. Your role on this team is significant because the decisions you make directly impact the community. When you lose the trust, integrity, and respect of those within your rural municipality, you risk losing the very foundation that holds the community together and the team together.

The team's leadership shapes the direction of the municipality and ensures that decisions are made with care,

transparency, and a focus on the greater good. The strength of your individual leadership contributes to the success of the community but also fosters an environment of trust, collaboration, and progress within the whole team. When you lead with integrity and purpose, you build a foundation for lasting, positive change in the community.

Leadership demands both effort and dedication. Like any skill developed through experience, it eventually becomes second nature, no longer feeling like a burden. True leadership isn't driven by personal agendas; it's about aligning with the goals and aspirations of your council. Strong leadership not only helps achieve objectives but also builds a foundation for a flourishing, sustainable community.

The rewards of guiding your community are immense—both in personal fulfillment and in the growth of the people you serve. Upholding the ethical values as set out in the bylaw not only makes the individual councillor a strong leader but also makes the team of elected officials better decision-makers for your rural municipality. Your community will thank you for it.



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LEADING THE CONTROL OF INVASIVE PLANTS IN YOUR RURAL MUNICIPALITY

UNDERSTAND THE INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF INVASIVE WEEDS



By
Betty Johnson, SARM Plant Health
Technical Advisor, Division 3

As spring approaches, you may notice weeds in the ditches, pastures, crop land, yards, or even in your new garden bed - they may be weeds that weren't there last summer. Have you ever wondered how these new weeds got there? How to take a lead on invasive plant control? To be a true champion over these invasive plants, you'll need a bit of strategy and maybe a good pair of garden gloves.

A plant is considered invasive when it is non-native to the area and competes with native plants; resulting in negative impacts. In Saskatchewan, weeds are designated as prohibited, noxious, or nuisance under *The Weed Control Act*. Prohibited weeds are required to be eradicated to prevent further spread if found because they are not yet established widely in the province. Prohibited weeds have a high potential to grow rapidly and can be difficult to control if established. Isolated noxious weed patches are to be eradicated and established noxious infestations are to be contained and controlled.

Common Burdock

In recent years, several prohibited weeds have been reported in Saskatchewan, including yellow star thistle, which was introduced through contaminated forage seed.

Common Burdock seed head



Common Burdock seeds on Bull's tail



Plant parts caught on vehicle

How do weeds get introduced and thrive in new places?

Weeds can quickly invade new areas, often outpacing native plants, and are frequently adorned with vibrant, eye-catching flowers. Their survival is remarkable; they multiply in many ways through seeds, root fragments, rhizomes, and stems. Weeds are well adapted to disturbed soils like ditches, construction sites, gardens, and agriculture fields.

Weeds spread in various ways, each with unique methods of propagation and characteristics that help them thrive. Many weeds are prolific seed producers, with seeds designed for efficient dispersal. For example, by late summer, Canada Thistle and Perennial Sow Thistle develop seed heads that resemble small parachutes that float on the wind. The seed-containing burs of Common Burdock cling to animal's fur and are carried over long distances.

Weeds take advantage of various dispersal agents, such as wind, water, birds, animals, and humans, to spread and establish themselves in new areas. Humans also play a key role in weed dispersal, and most of it happens unintentionally. Here are some examples of how humans become a carrier of weeds:

- Contaminated seed sources: unregistered and non-native seed packets may contain invasive weed seeds.
- Greenhouses: non-native plants and contaminated soils can be a source of weeds.
- Soil/gravel/mulch movement: seeds and vegetative parts are easily transferable through the movement of these materials.
- Machinery and vehicles: agriculture field equipment, mowers, graders, and tractors have parts that can carry soil and vegetative material like roots & seeds.
- Hay and straw from infested areas: weeds can go unnoticed in the tall grass and crops then get baled and moved to new areas.
- Mowing after the weed sets mature seeds: mowing at the wrong time can spread viable weed seeds.
- Intentional planting of non-native plants in gardens: many weeds have attractive flowers, but they can spread and colonize new areas quickly.
- Footwear: Tiny weed seeds can easily hitch a ride on shoes, spreading to new areas with every step.

How rural municipalities (RMs) can lead in controlling the spread of invasive plants?

Follow *The Weed Control Act*, appoint a Weed Inspector, develop a weed management plan, and update it annually. Weed Inspectors can do regular inspections of municipal gravel pits, roadsides, landfills, and green houses. Use a mapping tool like iMapInvasives to record invasive plant findings and it will help them to reinspect the locations. Create awareness in the RM about the weeds to watch for and how to dispose of them properly. RM employees can also take part in weed monitoring as they drive around municipal roads. Landfills can become heavily infested with weeds as they are collecting stations. Developing a proper disposal plan, like burning weeds along with the woods or burying them as deep as four feet to avoid unearthing, can be employed. Prevention and early detection are the most cost-effective methods to be proactive in weed management. Doing an inspection at locations before and after construction or development will prevent new weed infestations.

It is important to take initiatives in weed management and identifying the sources of invasive weeds. A collaborative effort from the entire community, including landowners, farmers, gardeners, and local authorities help to prevent their further spread.

Remember to include your SARM Plant Health Technical Advisor as an essential part of your weed management discussions. We are always here to assist your council, staff, and ratepayers with weed identification and developing your weed management plan. For more information, please visit sarm.ca/programs/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership/invasive-plant-control-program/



AN ALTERNATIVE LOOK AT COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RMS



By
Lorri Matthewson, MBA,
Owner, Founder & Facilitator,
Matthewson & Co.

If you want economic development to “work,” you need to have authentic leadership.

We’ve been selling ourselves short, and it is time for the world to understand all the good things we offer in rural municipalities (RMs) in Saskatchewan! This article challenges traditional thinking about small-population communities and examines ways we can celebrate and champion our RMs as critical economic drivers. It takes a different way of thinking to address the issues. It takes authentic leadership and a willingness to stretch beyond the more traditional approaches to economic development.

The rumours of our death have been greatly exaggerated.

For years, I have heard that our small towns, hamlets, and villages are dying. Like you, I hear people leave in droves for the city and never return. Except, that isn’t true for all communities. In Saskatchewan, it isn’t even true for most of our communities. Saskatchewan is unique, with much of its population living in towns, villages, and hamlets, with less than 1,000 people and more on the surrounding farms within the RMs.

If you check the census year after year, you will find that most of our small-population communities haven’t changed much

Did you know? Municipal councils are the only level of government that does not require formal education.

in decades when it comes to numbers. Those who have left a dying community often move to the next largest community rather than the city, speaking to a valued quality of life. We like how we live and don’t want to leave. But how do 650 people pay for infrastructure when the cost of putting it in differs from replacing it by 3000% and more? This isn’t an issue of decline; we just didn’t grow. And how could we grow when the cost of that growth depends on a small population? Without cutting services elsewhere, we cannot create enough population to keep up with the exorbitant infrastructure replacement costs.

Did you know?
We need a good idea of what we want to accomplish to accomplish anything.

Canada’s birthrate is steadily declining. The average woman has 1.33 children now, down from 3.91 in 1960. If not for immigration, many of our larger centers would have stopped growing ages ago. Many of our communities are not immigrant friendly, and do not provide the housing or resources needed to attract immigration. But we are not alone here. Larger centers rely on the taxes from new builds to offset the costs of aging infrastructure. They will eventually hit peak population too. Our more rural areas should be considered the canary in the coal mine; we need to consider a scenario where size doesn’t matter. We need to get to a place where what you contribute in terms of revenue should also play a part. And that takes leadership.

We are used to making do with less.

This isn’t news to our towns, villages, and hamlets. It certainly isn’t news to farmers. They have been getting by with less for a long time. These communities have unique challenges that the current systems do not address. I was at the national conference for economic development on the East Coast, having coffee with a federal government employee. When I told her we worked only in small-population communities, she asked, “Why are they still there?” I don’t remember the exact response, but it was something like, “Ever seen a pump jack in Halifax?” I was instantly annoyed.



Did you know? 90% of business growth within a region comes from existing businesses.

Incidentally, at that same national conference, there was zero representation from small-population regions; if you had less than 10,000 people, you didn't rate a mention. Anna, my right hand, and I spent the last afternoon of the conference wandering barefoot on the ocean shore. This wasn't our conference. It was all geared to the larger cities, like Toronto. No speaker addressed any issue remotely relevant to anyone but the major cities. Still, it was worth the trip because it raised some interesting conversation.

How could the powers that be completely ignore where the money comes from?

We underestimate our value.

We do a lot of training for municipal councils in Saskatchewan, and one of the most profound takeaways for me is that our councillors do not understand how important they are in the provincial economic landscape. They underestimate their value and do not understand how their communities fit into the big financial picture. And how would they know? Small populations are not represented at all on the national scale and are represented poorly on the provincial economic scale. Generally, we are described as country cousins, sleepy and otherwise, laid back, lazy, and irrelevant. Dependent.

We hear it at the council table, too, when elected officials say, "We are just a little town," "We are on our way out," "There is nothing here to develop," or "Why would anyone want to come here?"

So, not realizing how important they are to the provincial economy, some councils do not invest in training their staff or themselves; instead, some hoard taxpayers' dollars for a rainy day and invest in nice-to-haves instead of critical infrastructure. They hope that if they build it, people will come. Spoiler alert: They won't. And worse, your community will pay for the overbuild for decades while the infrastructure rots unless your asset management is on point.

Councils disregard the importance of Official Community Plans (OCPs) and asset management plans, considering them as things the government makes them do, as busy work. I disagree; these things will help sustain your community. But if you don't value your community, you won't do what you need to do to keep it functioning.

It will take authentic leadership to make a business case and demonstrate how investing in the rural municipalities pays off for everyone. It takes real champions to identify those gaps that get in the way of sustainable RMs and real leaders willing to take a few risks.

We need real leaders to facilitate a real change.

The economic bottom line is our towns, villages, hamlets, and RMs create wealth that benefits the whole province. We must value our regions based on what they produce for the province and let the province know we know. We need to capitalize on our assets! What is your RM worth to the province? What is the GDP it produces?

We must remember that most farms, towns, villages, and hamlets sprung on bald, flat prairies without housing, infrastructure, or jobs. A resilient crew of do-or-die leaders built what they needed. Now, we have our tax base and the odd grant, and it seems we are waiting for someone to fix it. But we can turn it around.

We owe it to our pioneer ancestors and our descendants to recreate our communities with the same spirit that built them. We need to consider different ways of doing things. We need leaders.



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NATIONAL LEADERSHIP & RURAL SASKATCHEWAN

What Rural Saskatchewan Needs from the Next Federal Government



By
Alicia Bay,
Manager -
Advocacy, SARM

As Canada gears up for the upcoming 2025 federal election, leadership and policy priorities will take center stage.

Leadership is subjective and it can mean different things to different people. However, I think it is safe to say that, for a federal government, strong leadership is not just about addressing immediate concerns but about setting a vision for a united and prosperous Canada. Our country's leaders need to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to representing all Canadians, urban and rural alike, and tackling the unique challenges faced by each community.

For rural communities, particularly in Saskatchewan, the upcoming election represents a critical opportunity to ensure their unique needs and challenges are heard and understood. The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) has been, and will continue to be, a strong advocate in outlining what rural Saskatchewan requires to thrive in an evolving political and economic landscape.

SARM's Role in Advocacy

Since 1905, SARM has been working to address the concerns of rural municipalities and ensure that their voices are heard by senior levels of government. SARM also plays an important role in the advocacy of Saskatchewan's agricultural sector.

In compliance with the *Act of Incorporation*, SARM directly and lawfully engages in activities that tend to advance the interests of agriculture, including the handling, transportation, processing, and marketing of grain and grain products. Furthermore, the act instructs that SARM be an actively engaged participant and member of the Canada Grains Council, as well as other organizations, associations, councils, congresses, and bodies advancing the interests of those who produce agricultural products.

Key to SARM's advocacy strategy is ensuring that rural priorities are not just heard but acted upon. This involves meeting with federal candidates, participating in policy discussions, and raising public awareness about the importance of rural issues. SARM's Board of Directors travel to Ottawa annually to engage directly with decision makers on parliament hill. They also routinely meet with a variety of members of parliament throughout the year. By engaging directly with federal leaders, SARM aims to secure commitments that will benefit Saskatchewan's rural residents for years to come.

Leadership for All Canadians

Effective leadership in federal politics requires a vision that includes all Canadians, down to the smallest rural municipalities.

The issues that dominate urban centres are often very different from the challenges faced by rural communities, such as broadband access, infrastructure deficits, and agricultural support. The next federal leaders must demonstrate an ability to craft policies that bridge these divides.

Rural areas, such as those in Saskatchewan, are vital to Canada's economic and cultural fabric. They are home to the nation's agricultural backbone, critical natural resource industries, and vibrant local communities.

Federally, rural municipalities are often left competing for funding with much larger centres despite programs specifically carved out for rural Canada. SARM has long advocated that when considering the definition of "rural," the federal government needs to put more thought into it rather than relying so heavily on population numbers. Factors like geographical spread, contributions to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP), and others bear further scrutiny.

Rural voices have often felt sidelined over the last decade. Federal leadership needs to listen to these voices and invest in rural Saskatchewan. Investing in rural Saskatchewan is critical to ensure that Canada meets its national and international trade obligations in a timely manner and continues to feed not only the country but the world.



Federal Priorities: A Rural Perspective

The upcoming federal election is an opportunity to establish priorities that align with the realities of rural communities. From economic development to essential services, here are key areas where federal candidates must focus their attention:

1. **Agricultural Support:**

Agriculture is the lifeblood of rural Saskatchewan, but farmers face a growing number of challenges, ranging from rising input costs to external factors like drought. SARM has called for a comprehensive federal approach to supporting agriculture, including better risk management programs, funding for innovation, and incentives for sustainable practices.

2. Carbon Tax: SARM would like to see a federal government that repeals the carbon tax. There should be no federally imposed carbon taxes. The provinces and territories should be free to develop their own

climate change policies, without federal interference or federal penalties. Saskatchewan farmers have made significant contributions, being early adopters of zero till technology and have never been monetarily recognized for their innovative approach and for the responsible land stewardship that they have shown for decades. The impact of the carbon tax is far reaching and has dire consequences on rural life with no real impact on reducing emissions.

3. **Infrastructure Investment:**

Rural municipalities in Saskatchewan face aging infrastructure that requires significant investment. Roads, bridges, and water systems are essential to daily life and economic activity, yet they are often underfunded. SARM has long advocated for federal programs that provide stable, long-term funding for these critical projects. Federal-provincial cooperation is imperative.

4. Healthcare Access: Rural areas often struggle to attract and retain medical professionals, leaving residents with limited access to essential health services. The federal government can play a role by

providing incentives for healthcare workers to practice in rural areas and increase funding to provinces and territories tasked with providing these services.

5. **Energy and Environmental Policy:**

Saskatchewan's rural communities are deeply connected to Canada's energy and natural resource sectors. Federal policies must balance the need for environmental stewardship with the economic realities of industries like oil, gas, and mining. SARM has emphasized the importance of policies that support sustainable resource development while protecting rural jobs.

6. **Rural Crime and RCMP Resources:**

Rural communities in Saskatchewan have seen a rise in crime in recent years, making public safety a top priority. SARM has called for increased funding to bolster RCMP resources and reduce rural crime. Enhanced patrols, quicker response times, and community-based crime prevention programs are essential to ensuring the safety and security of rural residents. Federal leadership must prioritize this issue to restore peace of mind for rural families and businesses.

7. **Broadband Access and Cellular Coverage:**

High-speed internet is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. Whether for education, business, or health care, connectivity enables rural communities to participate fully in modern life. Despite progress, many rural areas in Saskatchewan still experience inadequate or unreliable internet service. Federal leadership must commit to ensuring every Canadian has access to high-speed internet, regardless of their postal code.

8. **International Trade and Economic Growth:**

Rural Saskatchewan's economy is deeply tied to international trade. From agricultural exports like wheat and canola to natural resources, Saskatchewan's products fuel markets around the world. Federal leadership must prioritize strong trade agreements that ensure

market access for Canadian goods and protect the interests of rural producers. Policies that reduce trade barriers and support diversification into new markets are critical for the long-term sustainability of rural economies.

- 9. Rail and Port Access:** SARM has stressed the importance of positioning Canada as a reliable and competitive partner on the global stage. In recent years, labour disputes have had a detrimental impact on Saskatchewan agriculture producers and rural communities. SARM has been a strong advocate for the need to have reliable rail and port access so goods can make it to market. There is a need to mandate railways as an essential service.
- 10. Capital Gains Inclusion Rate and Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption (LCGE):** SARM has voiced concerns around potential legislative increases to the Capital

Gains Inclusion Rate and Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption (LCGE) since the current federal government tabled the legislation in 2024. The proguing of parliament in 2025 left many producers and business owners uncertain of how to proceed. SARM has been steadily advocating that the government rescind the capital gains inclusion rates and return to pre-June 25, 2024, levels. Furthermore, for any future government to revisit this legislation, rather than completely abandon it, would have dire consequences for rural Saskatchewan. Producers and business owners may be forced to make decisions when divesting assets that have an impact on food security, lead to potential job loss, undermine the local economy, and weaken the ability to grow or pass down the family business. SARM is also advocating that the LCGE for agricultural operations increase from \$2M to \$15M.

The Road Ahead

As election campaigns get underway, the importance of rural voices in shaping Canada's future cannot be overstated. For Saskatchewan's rural communities, the stakes are high. Federal leaders must demonstrate their understanding of rural needs and commit to addressing them through tangible actions and investments. Leadership that recognizes the contributions and challenges of rural Canada will not only strengthen these communities but also foster a more inclusive and prosperous nation.

SARM will continue to play a critical role in advocating for these priorities, ensuring that the unique needs of rural Saskatchewan remain front and center in federal policy discussions. The upcoming elections are an opportunity to define a vision for Canada that includes everyone—rural and urban alike.

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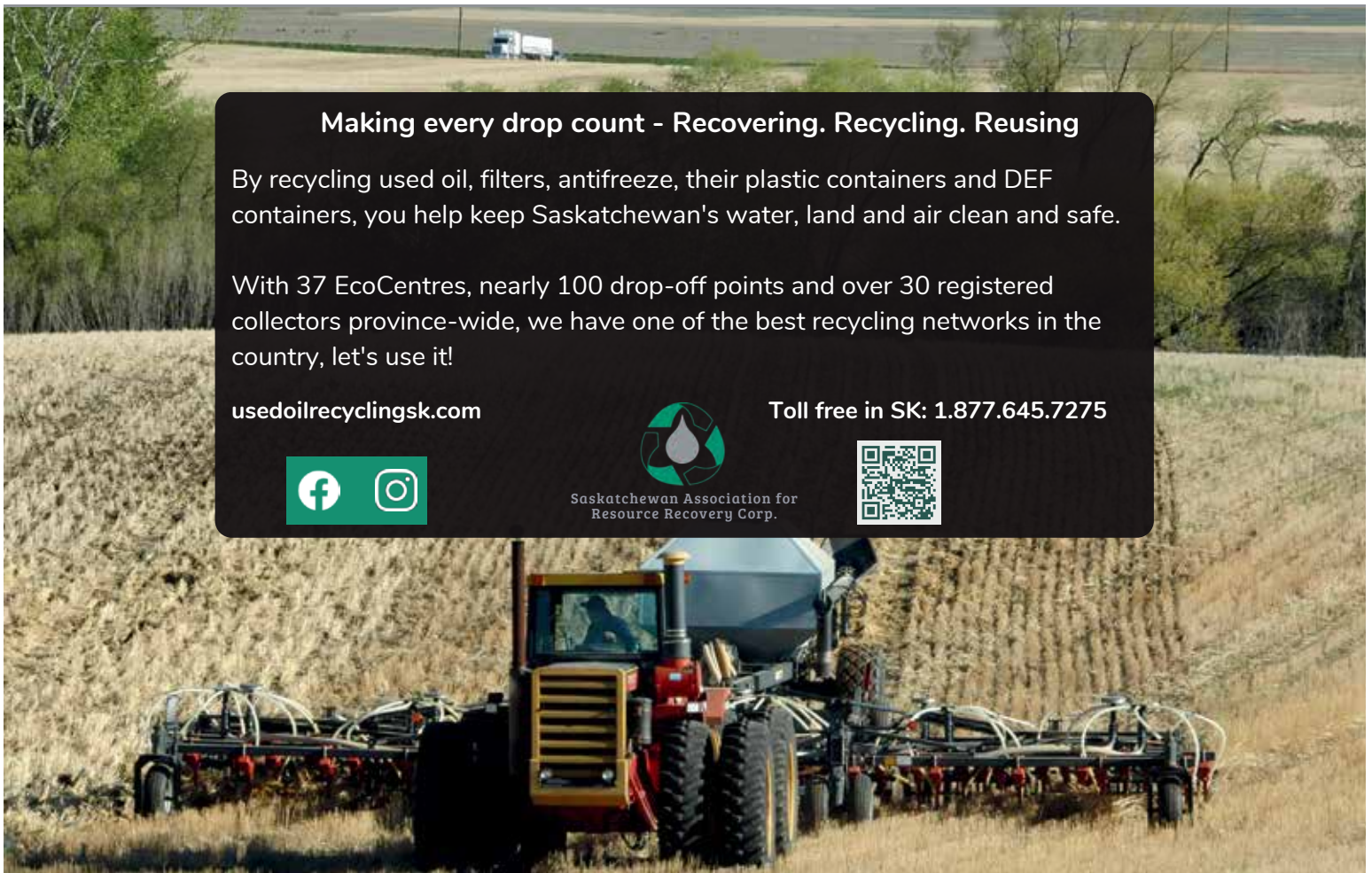
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WHAT MAKES A LEADER?

The SARM Board Weighs in with Their Thoughts

Leadership, the theme of this spring issue, comes in many different forms and ways of doing things. Whether it's demonstrated quietly through example or publicly in the roles you embrace, everyone has the capacity to lead through their actions, words, and influence. To explore this further, we asked our SARM Board of Directors about their own definitions of leadership, the qualities they believe define a great leader, and the individuals they admire and have been inspired by. Here's what they had to say.



Bill Huber,
President



Darren Steinley,
Vice President &
Division 3 Director

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership is having a vision of where you are and where you want to get to, whether it's in business or for a non-profit organization or in your community. You must be good at communicating, planning, and able to problem-solve and navigate any and all challenges that arise.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Being a decision-maker who helps empower others

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

The first three that come to mind are Ronald Reagan, Grant Devine, and Brad Wall.

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership is the ability to guide and influence individuals to work toward a common goal, ultimately benefiting society as a whole. It is about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Communication
- Passion
- Understanding/Empathy

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

It sounds cliché, but both of my parents, Adeline and Howard Steinley. They had a commitment to volunteering and service to their community, province, and country. I admire that they gave tirelessly and silently to the world, never asking for recognition.



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Bob Moulding,
 Division 1 Director

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership, to me, means leading by example, being open, honest, thoughtful, and caring. It also means listening to others to form an unbiased honest opinion.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Forward-thinking
- Integrity/Respect
- Problem-solving

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

That would be Scott Banda, who was the CEO of Federated Co-op Limited for many years.



Cody Jordison,
 Division 2 Director

What is your definition of leadership?

For me, leadership is about guiding people towards a goal. There are a lot of times where you disagree with the direction a group is going. You can do nothing, or you can develop a strategy for how to get there. Leaders do the latter.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- The ability to listen
- The presence of mind to ponder an idea before speaking to it or acting
- The ability to communicate

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

That would be Kent Fargo, a former Reeve of the RM of Lumsden. He taught me to think long-term and strategically.



Myron Kopec,
Division 4 Director

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership is the process of influencing, guiding, empowering, and inspiring individuals or groups to achieve a common goal or vision. An excellent leader embodies a range of qualities that inspire trust, motivate others, and drive progress.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Integrity
- Communication
- Decisiveness

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

Throughout my years of experience, I have met and had the opportunity to work with many great leaders who have inspired me. Since they have all influenced me throughout my career/life with the qualities that I have identified above, it would be unfair to single out just one of them.



Blair Cummins,
Division 5 Director

What is your definition of leadership?

To me, leadership is about leading by example and sharing opportunities with the entire group. A leader encourages involvement of all members of the organization and is not afraid of making tough decisions and standing by them.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Patience
- Good listening
- Good BS detector

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

Ike Thiessen, former president of SARM, from 1986 - 1988.



Randy Aumack,
Division 6 Director

What is your definition of leadership?

Leadership is the art of working with and motivating a team or group of people to work together to accomplish a common goal.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Approachability
- Honesty/Integrity
- Confidence

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

Brad Wall, former Saskatchewan Premier.



Sheila Keisig,
Ex-Officio Director

What is your definition of leadership?

I believe a true leader is someone that listens to all sides and gives full attention to each person without interruption. A good leader also recognizes that it takes an entire team to get things done.

What 3 qualities do you feel an effective leader must have?

- Listening skills
- Open-mindedness
- Fair (but firm) decision-making

Who is a leader from the past that you admire?

My first reeve that I worked with, Larry Jankoski, was amazing at embodying all the qualities above. He had a way of taking the time to listen to all, but still was able to give a firm-but-commonsense decision on many things.



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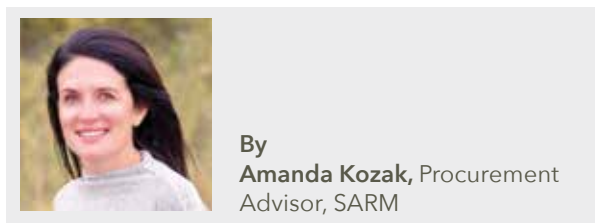
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LEADING AN EFFECTIVE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Tips from SARM’s Procurement Advisor



By
Amanda Kozak, Procurement Advisor, SARM

Leading an effective procurement process requires taking a strategic approach to ensure that your RM’s needs are met while minimizing risks and maximizing benefits for the municipality. Part of my role as Procurement Advisor at SARM is to help coach and advise RMs on how to achieve positive results from their procurements. The next time you need to procure goods or services for your RM, here are some key strategies for you to consider:

1. RECOGNIZE WHAT’S REQUIRED.

The needs recognition stage of a procurement process enables you to sketch out a comprehensive plan for procuring the goods and/or services that you’re after in a timely manner. Is this a one-time purchase, or is it a service that will be needed year after year? Will this purchase cross a trade agreement threshold which obligates you to put out a competitive bid? Coming up with the detailed specifications at the outset of the process is key. Determining these important pieces will help to decide which competitive bidding process is best to use in each circumstance.

2. MAKE A PROCUREMENT PLAN.

Set the standards and the service expectations for your RM. For example, take gravel hauling. Say your RM needs an estimated 13,000 cubic yards of gravel to be spread within your boundaries in 2025. Do you know how many potential haulers there are near your RM? Do you know which type of insurance(s) may be required? Through a market analysis, you will find out how many potential haulers there are and which type of competitive bid is the best option. By doing a proper analysis, you will also understand current pricing and market trends, both of which are important to ensure that as you tender, you closely align with the market’s capacities.

3. DETERMINE YOUR PROCUREMENT STRATEGY.

With your market analysis done, now you can determine your competitive bid strategy. Will you be issuing a competitive bid (Request For Proposal (RFP)/Request For Quote (RFQ)) or utilizing SARM’s buying group? A well-crafted procurement strategy helps ensure that your purchasing activities are efficient, cost effective, and align with the goals of your RM. You can reach out to me, and I can provide you with a template or assist with drafting your procurement documents, depending on your desired outcome.

4. EVALUATE AND SELECT A SUPPLIER.

Once your procurement opportunity has closed, you will move into the evaluation and award phase. Here, you will want to have established roles and responsibilities for procurement activities in your RM. The evaluation should be done objectively by municipal administration, taking any potential or perceived conflict of interest into consideration. You must evaluate only on what was asked for in the competitive bid. Having a clear set of evaluation criteria and weighting on what you expect from supplier responses, in advance of the evaluation, is important. Always document the evaluation process used to select the supplier and keep the bid and evaluation process unbiased and confidential.

5. AWARD AND IMPLEMENT YOUR CONTRACT.

Once the evaluation is complete, sometimes, depending on what you are purchasing, there is negotiation with suppliers. From there, you move to award the contract. Typically, this is when council will get involved, so they can authorize the Purchase Order (PO) allocating the funds to buy the goods or service. After the contract is signed, if you did use a public procurement, remember to post the award on SaskTenders. This should typically be done within a few weeks.

After the contract is awarded, debriefs with unsuccessful suppliers can occur. This is an essential part of transparency in a procurement process, as it lets those unsuccessful bidders understand why their company didn't get the work. This is not an opportunity for them to complain, influence the evaluation process, or change the score or outcome. The debrief is meant to be an opportunity for them to hear what they can do better the next time.

Procurement is a complex field that requires a strategic approach and attention to detail

6. MANAGE YOUR CONTRACT AND DELIVERABLES.

For equipment and commodity supply contracts, there may be less need for active contract management. The contract management piece really comes into effect for services. If, for example, you have contracted with a gravel hauler, administration needs to follow up to ensure the contractor is meeting the expectations of the RM. A service level agreement is recommended for service contracts. If the hauler isn't performing as per the contract, have regular meetings with them, documenting the issues until they are remedied. Document the good, bad, and the ugly. I often hear of situations where people don't want to award the contract to their previous supplier as they didn't do a good job, but nothing was documented. If it is not documented in writing, it will be very hard to eliminate that supplier. Suppliers and contractors should know how they are being rated by an RM. If they aren't doing a good job, they should know about it. It shouldn't come as a surprise to them the next time they put a bid in for that service.

Assess procurement activities and supplier performance often to drive continuous improvement

Firearms safety is my responsibility.

– David Yorke, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation President

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Start small. Schedule milestone meetings for ongoing improvements, conduct post contract reviews, and ensure that your competitive bid documents state that past performance will be considered in any future opportunities.

Having a good contract management process is really about ensuring that there are no surprises, like missed deadlines or poor delivery. Evaluating suppliers on things like response time or accuracy, depending on the type of service, is important. Reach out to me, I have sample supplier performance evaluations that I can send you to help effectively manage your contracts by keeping things organized and documented.

The procurement process is lengthy, and the administrative hours can rack up quickly. By developing a solid foundation, with policy and processes, you can create efficiencies to reduce that administrative pressure.

Check with SARM the next time you are thinking about making a purchase. I can help you decide which tool will give you the best outcome, or if SARM's purchasing group is an option. Being a member of SARM provides access to procurement advice - already paid for.

DON'T DECEIVE YOURSELF UNDERESTIMATING MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP



By
Dustin Resch, Director, Capacity Building & Programs, SARM

My project this past fall was to build a garage in our backyard. After getting quotes from a few contractors, I decided to build it myself. You know—to save money. I mean, how hard can it be to build a simple garage? People do it all the time. Besides, I thought, there is always YouTube if I ran into any trouble. In the late summer, I bought my building permit, cleared the site, ordered the garage package, had the pad poured, and organized a team to help me one weekend. About four hours into our build, I realized that I had bit off way more than I could chew. How do you get the trusses set and spaced properly? How will we get the huge garage door beam attached to the walls? How do you deal with finicky corners on the soffit and fascia? What’s the proper way to align your shingles? How can I get the siding around the electrical service connection? And how in the world do you install a garage door and opener?

Thankfully, I have a good group of generous and knowledgeable friends who were willing to help me at each stage. We completed the garage just before the snow fell—several weeks later than I expected. My overconfidence early in the fall was a good example of what has come to be known as the Dunning-Kruger Effect (DKE). The DKE is a bias inexperienced people have where they overestimate their actual abilities and the quality of their work. It’s the armchair quarterback who thinks they know better than the NFL player how to run a play. It’s the internet-searching “expert” giving out medical advice. In my case, I had remarkably overestimated my construction skills. Looking back, I should have known that I wasn’t experienced enough in building to accurately judge my building skills. But this is how cognitive biases work—we don’t realize we have them!

Reflecting on this experience, there might be a lesson or two here for those early in their role as elected officials. If you haven’t served as a municipal councillor or reeve before, congratulations! You will absolutely and without question bring many skills, a lot of knowledge, and your character to this new role.



Did you know? A recent survey identified over 75 learning opportunities in the province directed to municipalities!

But beware of the DKE—if you’ve never served as an elected official before, there may be even more to it than you expect. And that’s okay. Anything can be learned if you give yourself the opportunity and put yourself in spaces to learn it. After all, my garage did eventually get built. It just took lots of learning, a little time, and some knowledgeable friends.

SARM wants to provide those same things—lots of learning, a little time, and some knowledgeable friends—to elected officials in the rural municipal world. We do this by providing several formative experiences. These take a variety of forms: workshops, conventions, break-out sessions, online courses, etc. And SARM itself is constantly learning how to help support rural municipalities in their learning.

One major initiative that will directly benefit elected officials is the launch of SARM’s “SEEDS for Elected Officials.” SEEDS for Elected Officials is series of short, easy to complete online learning opportunities. In just ten minutes, you can complete a short package of learning that contains essential guidance on

critical issues for elected officials. These modules can be completed on the go—whether through your phone or your computer. SEEDS for Elected Officials gives you a taste for the sort of things you'll need to consider as you start your role as a municipal leader. SEEDS is slated to roll out in 2025.

Another one of the flagship programs SARM supports is the Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP). This program has been empowering emerging municipal leaders for more than 20 years and boasts hundreds of graduates. In an effort to meet the rapidly changing demands of being a municipal leader, the MLDP is undergoing a major review. The purpose of this review is to find ways to optimize and modernize everything from the topics you'll learn about, how you'll learn, the quality of your facilitators, and even how to make registration more convenient. In the coming months, both newly elected and experienced elected officials will find that the changes to this program boost their effectiveness in their roles.

Each year, SARM offers its members two major convention opportunities. The annual convention that takes place in March includes a large trade show and several prominent speakers. The midterm convention, which takes place in November, is

focused on learning.

Over the period of two days, attendees at SARM's midterm convention will learn about emerging issues in the municipal world of rural Saskatchewan. Importantly, there are lots of opportunities at midterm convention to learn from your peers in municipal leadership. Peer learning is a powerful thing! You don't need to "reinvent the wheel" each time you face a challenge in your municipality; the chances are that one of your peers will have already faced it. You can learn from their experience, and they can learn from yours.

The best way to deal with the Dunning Kruger Effect is to put yourself in places where you can learn what you don't know. This can include formal programming, like SEEDS or the MLDP, but it can also include interaction with those further along on their municipal leadership journey. SARM is committed to building capacity among rural municipalities, so I encourage you to check out the learning opportunities that are available.

Did you know?
SARM's online learning system (SEEDS) is slated to launch in 2025!

How do you deal with kochia in your R.M.?

Herbicide-resistant kochia is on the rise.

In 2013, only 5% of kochia surveyed in Saskatchewan was glyphosate-resistant. By 2019, 87% was.* The pace at which kochia develops herbicide resistance means herbicides alone are no longer sufficient to control it.

Forages are an alternative management strategy for kochia, remediating salinity and altering the conditions that kochia loves.

Forage plants have been shown to suppress the growth of kochia and reduce its emergence by up to 80%.

*KOCHIA RESISTANCE UPDATE: RESULTS FROM THE 2019 TO 2023 GLYPHOSATE, DICAMBA, AND FLUROXYPYR-RESISTANT KOCHIA PRAIRIE SURVEYS



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Leadership in mental health



The Do More Agriculture Foundation

By
Merle Massie, Executive Director,
The Do More Agriculture Foundation

When someone is injured or has an illness, what do you do?

If you fall on ice and break your arm, there is a process: emergency room, triage, x-ray, diagnosis, cast, six weeks of discomfort and changes in your daily life (you really do need two working arms to pull up jeans and get them buttoned – trust me on this one), then follow up x-rays, cast comes off, and rehabilitation.

Everyone you work with or live with recognizes that while you're in a cast and healing, you'll need some modifications and support (see comment about pants). Can't lift the turkey in and out of the oven? Change the menu, change the cook, or change the host duties. Can't lift boxes at work? You're shifted onto desk duties while you recuperate. Everyone adjusts.

How do you adapt when someone has a mental injury or illness? What accommodations do you put in place? What's your process?

Or, are your expectations different? Why? An illness or injury that isn't visible (no cast nor a temporary wheelchair) is still serious. All injuries and illness, caused by physical incidents or emotional ones, require time and accommodation and support, to heal.

MENTAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES: CARE LEVELS

About three years ago, I took a course in Mental Health First Aid.

As a family member of someone who died by suicide, I believe it's important to get the best training that I can, for both physical health (first aid and CPR) and for mental health. I might learn enough to make a difference.

The training went across two days and covered a lot of ground.

One of the activities was a sorting game. We were given cue cards. Each card contained an illness, either physical or mental. The cards ranged from gingivitis to paraplegia to breast cancer to palliative care, and from stress to anxiety to bulimia to schizophrenia.

There were as many cards, and as many medical conditions, as we had people taking the course. In fact, most of us had at least two cards.

Our challenge was simple: work with one another to discuss, then put the cards in order from the ones that required the least amount of medical intervention to those that required the most support and care. And, to put them together – one list, physical and mental injuries and illnesses together.

The results were eye opening and caused a lot of discussion.

It turns out that the illness that struck my brother (bipolar disorder) falls at the heavy end of the health intervention spectrum, far more so than most of the common cancers including breast or prostate cancer, two that generally garner lots of attention and support when someone is diagnosed.

I do not disparage those hard paths. I'm pointing out that bipolar disorder is even harder to walk with, and requires *even more* care than many common cancers, according to medical professionals.

In fact, if I remember correctly, bipolar disorder fell very near paraplegia in terms of needs. Anxiety and depression fell somewhere in the middle of the pack, near breast and prostate cancer and diabetes.

The point of the exercise was a stark reminder: mental health injuries and illnesses require care, support, intervention, and time, just as do physical injuries.



MENTAL HEALTH AND THE WORKPLACE

A recent report by *The Economist* studying large multi-national companies revealed that when people miss work for a longer period of time, the top reason is cancer. That was not a surprise.

The surprise – and the article framed it as a surprise -- was what landed in second. On the heels of cancer, the second reason why people miss work for extended periods is mental health, specifically mental injury and mental illness.

I was not surprised. What I felt in reading the article, and in participating in the mental health first aid sorting exercise, was relief. And vindication.

Navigating mental injuries and mental illnesses, working daily with these adversities to find a path forward for good mental health, is *hard*.

Navigation and management consumes the resources of the person who walks with the injury or illness, and their caregivers and supporters. Active management leaves fewer resources for the business of daily life – such as work. When the injury or illness is acute or surging, that person (and sometimes caregivers) will likely need to be away from work for an extended period of time.

Think cancer treatment or heart surgery; plan and support accordingly.

Business leadership will do well to understand that injury and illness will require time for healing and recuperation. And, as in the sorting exercise, there is absolutely no difference between physical and mental health. They each require time to heal.

WHAT IS A MENTAL INJURY? WHAT IS A MENTAL ILLNESS?

Mental injuries, if you've not heard that term, include issues of grief, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and burnout. It's when a person is injured by the circumstances in which they live.

Mental illnesses are more long-term, and mostly quite manageable with good support. They may surface when an injury is severe or goes untreated for too long or an illness may spontaneously arise for no known cause. Among mental illnesses, you may have heard of anxiety, depression, anorexia and bulimia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, addiction, bipolar disorder, and the range of schizophrenias, amongst many others.

One in five people experience a mental injury or illness in any given year. Over a quarter of Canadians report that these injuries and illnesses affect their ability to function.



Loneliness is a public health issue. It can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and depression. Community connection is critical for good health.

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH: THE REALITY

Where the reality of healing time hits hard is against brick walls on two sides: cultural shame surrounding mental illness, and, small businesses (such as rural municipal offices, or farms) that run lean.

Running lean is often a business and farm necessity. Unlike teachers, there isn't a pool of qualified substitute farmers waiting in the wings for a morning call to come out and feed cows or fix a tractor, just to keep things going for a day. Or a week. Or a month.

(Hey... is that a business idea? Maybe!)

What I also know is that there remains a difference, particularly in rural communities, between physical and mental health.

If a farmer can't work during peak season because of a physical injury or illness, communities rally. Fifteen combines have those fields done in no time, and everyone is fed. Someone is diagnosed with cancer? There are dances and GoFundMe pages and casseroles.

If it's a mental injury or illness, there isn't the same community energy of support and work and help. Instead, shame and fear take over. There is withdrawal, framed as 'space,' and people find themselves isolated and alone.

Stigma is embedded, and hard to root out. It's something each of us have, even if we don't always see it. In some, it's so deep and so pervasive, we'd prefer not to talk about it. If someone becomes ill, chances of being hired or supported disappear. Often, the fear and stigma stops people from getting the help they may need; they just can't risk the isolation and shame.

The only way to confront stigma is to identify it, acknowledge it, and actively learn to set it aside to move forward, to offer help, to get help, to build support.

When someone has lots of people around them who help and support, they recover better from acute mental injury and illness. Isolation and shame hurts recovery.

WHAT CAN LEADERS DO?

Leadership for mental health is about creating space for learning – even in the face of active antagonism. Resources, including workshops, exist and can be brought into a business or a community, to the RM office or right to the farm.

The Do More Agriculture Foundation, for example, supports community-level events and can help small rural agricultural businesses access training. The Agricultural Health and Safety Network at the University of Saskatchewan also offers community-level mental health training events.

What I've learned is that navigating and managing mental injury and illness requires support from the people around the one who is hurting – just as do other injuries or illnesses. There is a reason why there is a mental health first aid class. It's really helpful.

Leaders can bring in training to increase mental health literacy; when people know more, they can do more. It's that simple.

Many come away from such training sessions with increased bravery for themselves, to talk about issues and seek help. Helping yourself is a gift that keeps giving back – to your farm, to your family, to your RM, to your community, and most of all, to yourself.

The more people understand about mental injuries and illness, the better. And, having a larger community of people who understand and support, instead of shame and judge, means better outcomes. For people. For families. For farms. For businesses. For communities.



HEALTH IS HEALTH

Brave leadership champions mental health and opens space to learn, talk, ask questions, and listen.

So the next time someone in your circle has been injured or has an illness, remember: research shows that both mental health and physical health require extensive support to heal, to recuperate, to manage, and to adapt.

If you're reacting to one illness or injury differently than the other, ask yourself: why? Chances are, you've got some deep-rooted fears, assumptions, and responses that aren't serving you, your family, your neighbors, or your community.

It's time to change how we talk about mental health. Health is health – and everyone deserves it.

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Finance & Administration



Breanna Janzen
Senior Accountant



Candace Jennings
Accounting
Assistant



Karen Takach
Administrative
Assistant

SARM's Finance and Administration Team

provides the budgeting, accounting, and reporting functions for SARM, the Insurance and Benefits Funds, all externally funded programs, and the Tax Loss Compensation Trust Funds administered by SARM.

Our team also recommends, develops, and implements short and long-term financial goals and objectives to support the long-term financial health of SARM.

In addition, we provide administrative assistance performing reception duties that include being the first point of contact for all guests and SARM members both in-person as well as virtually by phone and email.

Members go to Finance for answers to questions related to invoices and payments, information about the tax loss compensation process, reporting of the status of their Trust Fund account, and to obtain a high interest savings account for their cash balances.

Members go to Administration for any general inquiries related to SARM either by phone or through the sarm@sarm.ca email inbox. Our reception team is always available to assist with connecting members with helpful resources to find the answers they need, determining which SARM or government department or other agency has the resource they require.

The admin team also assists members in posting their Classifieds ads on the SARM website.



NELSON GRANITE

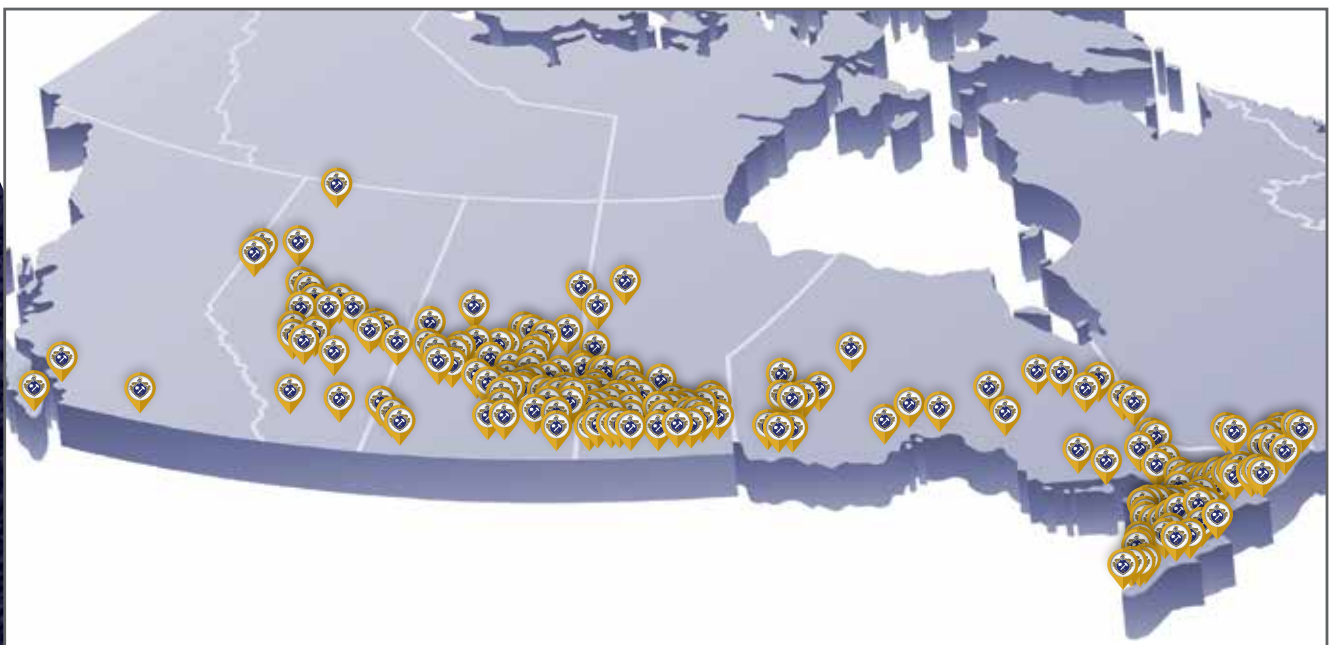


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MEMBER NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



JOE VILCU
RM OF CYMRI NO. 36
IN MEMORIAM

Joe Vilcu was an integral part of the RM of Cymri for over 27 years. Starting out as a Councillor and eventually becoming Reeve, Joe took pride in his Municipality and its people. He was deeply invested in the boards the RM Council was part of, finding his passion on South Center Transportation Planning Committee, St. Josephs Hospital Foundation, Weyburn and District Hospital Foundation, Midale/Cymri Fire & Rescue, the Midale Curling Club, as well as many other. But more than anything, Joe's passion was his family and his community. Joe was a familiar face to all in Midale, whether you were a child or an adult, everyone knew Joe and appreciate his commitment to leaving the community a better place. Joe will be deeply missed by all who knew him, but Joe was successful in his pursuit to make his Municipality and his community a better place. The legacy he leaves behind will be one his family can cherish for years to come.



MORRIS ZAZULA
RM OF PONASS LAKE NO. 367
IN MEMORIAM

Morris Zazula passed away December 8, 2023 at the age of 87. He was raised in the Scrip area. He married Sylvia Lavis in 1963 and they raised their 4 children on the farm. Morris served as Division 3 Councillor for the RM of Ponass Lake No. 367 from 1969 to 1987. He enjoyed seeing and being part of the progress that the RM achieved through those years. Morris loved the farm and the lifestyle that he and Sylvia were able to live. Gone from this earth too soon, he is missed by family and friends.



DALE SCHWARTZ
RM OF COTE NO. 271
IN MEMORIAM

May 27, 1948 to June 18, 2024.

It is with deep sadness that the family of Dale Schwartz had to say goodbye to a husband, father, brother and grandfather on June 18, 2024. At the time of his passing, Dale was doing what he loved, working his cattle. He passed away peacefully near his home quarter. Dale grew up in Runnymede, SK and was the oldest of seven children. He married Carlotta in 1971 and they made their home up on the hill near Runnymede. This is where they raised their family and Dale continued his passion of grain farming and raising cattle. Dale began farming at a young age with his father and brothers. Eventually, Dale farmed with his son, Christopher and built the farm the family loves today.

Dale proudly served as councillor of Division 4 with the RM of Cote No. 271 for 45 years (1979-2024).

He is survived by his wife Carlotta, son Christopher, daughters Jennifer and Erin. and five of his most favorite grandchildren.



RICHARD CHAPMAN
RM OF SOURIS VALLEY NO. 7
IN MEMORIAM

It is with heavy hearts that the RM of Souris Valley No. 7 mourns the loss of our friend, Richard "Rick" Chapman, who passed away on July 4, 2024. Rick served on Council from 2012 to 2022. Rick will be forever remembered for his dedication, his infectious laugh, his quick wit and his wisdom.



RONALD BEZUGLY
RM OF GREAT BEND NO. 405
IN MEMORIAM

Ron Bezugly July 26, 1942 - July 17, 2024 It's with great sadness, we announce the sudden passing of Ron. Loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, brother, relative and friend.

Ron was born and raised on the farm at Borden, Saskatchewan. Ron is survived by his loving wife Julia, son Todd (Kim) grandchildren Carter, Dustin (Taylor), Jasmine, Cole Flath (Courtney) great grandchildren, Codie & Cohen Flath, as well as his sister Lorraine Wombold (Ron) and family. Ron is predeceased by his parents, Walter & Vera and daughter Lisa. Ron loved all types of sports, especially curling, ball and hockey. Coaching many hockey teams in the Borden arena. He took great pride in raising good cattle, crops and always enjoyed the harvest season. He was an airplane pilot and a truck driver. Ron enjoyed driving his semi hauling grain for local producers as well as his own. Ron and Julia spent many years travelling to various locations, but their favorite was their winter home in Arizona where they made many lifelong friends.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Rest in peace Ron.

DON ALDAG
RM OF CARMICHAEL NO. 109
IN MEMORIAM

RM of Carmichael No. 109 Don Aldag served as a Councillor for the RM - 1989 - 2002.

RETIREMENT



BARRY FITZPATRICK
RM OF ENNISKILLEN NO. 3
RETIREMENT

Barry Fitzpatrick served as the Division 1 Councillor for 29 Years - 1995-2024. He also served as the APAS Representative for many of those years. Barry was a committee member for many years on the A.D.D. District No. 41 Board, Borderline Housing Board, Cemeteries Committee, Community Consultive Group, Oxbow Business Association, Southeast Tours and Trails, and Southeast Transportation Planning Committee. We thank Barry for his dedication to the RM and the boards he provided throughout his service. We wish him all the best in the future.



GERALD YAUSIE
RM OF COLONSAY NO. 342
RETIREMENT

The RM of Colonsay would like to thank Gerald Yausie for his 12 years of service as Reeve from 2013 to 2024. Gerald genuinely cared about the RM and worked alongside his council to serve the needs of all ratepayers. Gerald's experience and knowledge allowed him to lead in a level-headed, respectful manner. His dedication to the RM will be greatly missed. Enjoy your retirement.



DUNCAN MCVICAR
RM OF COLONSAY NO. 342
RETIREMENT

The RM of Colonsay would like to thank Duncan McVicar for his 8 years of service as Council for Division 3 from 2016 to 2024. Duncan served with a tireless dedication and quiet wisdom. Duncan was known to find humor in almost every situation. His willingness to lend a hand and share a laugh will be greatly missed. Enjoy your retirement.



2025 is a revaluation year when all properties in the province receive updated assessments.

SAMA conducts revaluations based on a four-year cycle. 2021 was the year of the last revaluation, and the 2025 Revaluation will see assessed values updated to reflect a new valuation date of January 1, 2023. Revaluations are historical which means that 2025 values reflect a property's value as of January 1, 2023.

SAMA's goal for the 2025 Revaluation is to provide fair and accurate updated property assessments for our clients and stakeholders to support their ability to provide important services to the public.

Municipalities will be receiving their 2025 values packages in the coming weeks. If you have any questions about your new assessments, please do not hesitate to contact SAMA.

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.



KEN BOERRICHTER
RM OF GRASS LAKE NO. 381
RETIREMENT

Councillor for the RM of Grass Lake No. 381 from 1997 to 2024



HERB AXTEN
RM OF SURPRISE VALLEY NO. 9
RETIREMENT

On December 5, 2024, the RM of Surprise Valley No. 9 honoured Reeve Herb Axten on his retirement from Council.

Herb joined the RM as Reeve in 1997 and held his position for 27 years until his retirement when he chose not to seek re-election in the fall of 2024.

Herb's dedication to his community and his relationship with sales reps, ratepayers and fellow Councillors will be missed around the council table. Herb's humour, which was displayed annually at the SARM Conventions, will also be missed by everyone.

Congratulations Herb and we wish you the best in your retirement.



PETER CURRIE
RM OF MARTIN NO. 122
RETIREMENT

The RM of Martin #122 would like to recognize recently retired Division 3 Councillor Peter Currie for his 17 years of service. Like his father John, who served as Division 3 Councillor for 41 years, Peter became Division 3 Councillor in the fall of 2007 and led by quiet example. Peter served as Deputy Reeve from 2012 as well as being an extremely valuable member of the Gravel Committee for his entire tenure. He also represented the RM of Martin for many years at both the SARM Mid-Term and Annual Conventions. Peter's quiet way and sly humour will be missed.

The Council, Staff and Ratepayers would like to thank Peter for his time as well as his wealth of experience and knowledge. We wish him all the best in his retirement from Council.



JERRY KIRILENKO
RM OF ROSEMOUNT NO. 378
RETIREMENT

The RM of Rosemount would like to recognize recently retired Division 3 Councillor Jerry Kirilenko for his 41 years of service to the municipality. Jerry's retirement on Nov. 14th of 2024 awarded him the title of the longest serving councillor for the RM of Rosemount.

Jerry began representing Division 3 on Dec. 14, 1983 and in Dec. 2005 the Hamlet of Cando was added to his duties. Jerry has been a devoted and knowledgeable member of council and enjoyed many years of attending SARM Convention and the Municipal Hail AGM.

Council and staff would like to thank Jerry for his dedication to the RM and the community of Cando; his wisdom will be missed.

Enjoy your well deserved retirement Jerry!



DENNIS FIDDLER
RM OF WEBB NO. 138
RETIREMENT

The RM of Webb No. 138 would like to recognize Dennis Fiddler for serving the past 37 years on council. He was elected on council as Division 3 Councillor in 1987 and held that position until 1990 and then was elected as Reeve from 1991-2024. His passion for the RM has been well showcased over the last 37 years. Dennis has always been very involved in many different committees over the years and has attended many conventions representing the RM. Dennis has also received the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for exemplary public service and volunteer service to the community in 2022. His dedication to the RM of Webb has been well appreciated and we would like to thank him for the time he served on council and wish him all the best in his retirement.



JAMES JOICE
RM OF SOUIS VALLEY NO. 7
RETIREMENT

James "Jim" Joice served as Division 1 Councillor from 2012 until his retirement in November of 2024. Pictured is Reeve Glenn Walkeden presenting Jim Joice with a token of the RM's appreciation for his years of dedication to the municipality. The RM wants to thank Jim for his years of service to the municipality, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

AGENDA MARCH 11-13 Prairieland Park Saskatoon



Scan the QR code or visit sarm.ca for more information about the annual convention.

Tuesday, March 11

- 8:00 a.m.** Registration / Trade Show
- 10:00 a.m.** Dialogue Sessions w/ Prov. Ministers
- 12:00 p.m.** Lunch / Trade Show
- 1:30 p.m.** Opening Ceremonies
- 2:15 p.m.** Addresses
- 2:45 p.m.** Networking / Trade Show Break
- 3:00 p.m.** Presentations
- 3:30 p.m.** Fireside Chat

Wednesday, March 12

- 8:00 a.m.** Registration / Trade Show
- 9:00 a.m.** Premier's Address
- 9:30 a.m.** Bear Pit Session w/ Prov. Ministers
- 11:30 a.m.** Lunch / Trade Show
- 1:00 p.m.** Addresses & Presentations
- 2:00 p.m.** Networking / Trade Show Break
- 3:00 p.m.** Resolutions

Thursday, March 13

- 8:00 a.m.** Registration
- 9:00 a.m.** SARM President & VP Acceptance Addresses
- 9:15 a.m.** SARM Division Meetings
- 10:30 a.m.** Networking Break
- 10:45 a.m.** SARM Financial Report
- 11:00 a.m.** Presentations
- 11:30 a.m.** STARS Presentation & 50/50 Draw
- 11:45 a.m.** Bitter End Draw / Adjournment



DAVID JENSEN
RM OF CARMICHAEL NO. 109
RETIREMENT



PAULA LARSON
RM OF PLEASANT VALLEY
NO. 288
RETIREMENT

The RM of Pleasant Valley No. 288 would like to congratulate Division 1 Councillor Paula Larson on her retirement. Paula served on the municipal council for 8 years and was truly dedicated to serving the municipality. Her devotion was shown in her attendance to many SARM Midterm and Annual Conventions as well her leadership during meetings. We thank Paula for her time and wish her all the best in her retirement.



JACK RITCHIE
RM OF MARRIOTT NO. 317
RETIREMENT

The RM of Marriott No. 317 would like to recognize the retirement of long time Division 1 Councillor Jack Ritchie. With 14 years of service, Jack will be greatly missed. Jack began his time on council in the fall of 2010 and has been a committed member of council ever since. His experience with policy implementation has truly been invaluable. Jack was always willing to learn and represented the municipality at many Midterm and Annual SARM Conventions. We wish Jack all the best in his retirement and thank him for his time and dedication to the RM of Marriott No. 317.

BERNIE LEMIRE
RM OF CARMICHAEL NO. 109
RETIREMENT

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.

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



JOHN SLABIK
RM OF GULL LAKE NO. 139
RETIREMENT

The RM of Gull Lake No. 139 extends its heartfelt gratitude to councillor John Slabik for his 14 years of dedicated service, from 2010 to 2024. During his tenure, John contributed greatly to the community through his involvement in numerous committees. Among these, the South West Transportation Planning Committee had a special place in his heart, and he approached his work there with remarkable passion and commitment. Reeve Kramer, along with council members and staff, sincerely thank John for his invaluable contributions to the RM of Gull Lake No. 139. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



ROBERT ADAMS
RM OF CAMBRIA NO. 6
RETIREMENT

The RM of Cambria would like to recognize Robert Adams for his 31 years of service with the municipality. Robert served as Division 1 councillor beginning in 1993 and remained a devoted member ever since up until his retirement in 2024. We thank him for his time on Council and wish him the best in his retirement!



BRUCE HUNTER
RM OF INVERGORDON NO. 430
RETIREMENT

Congratulations to Bruce Hunter on 28 years of dedicated service to the RM of Invergordon.

Bruce Hunter was first elected to Council in January of 1997 as Division 4 Councillor. He was later elected in a by-election for the office of Reeve in December of 2014 and held the position until retiring with the 2024 general municipal election on November 13, 2024. Over the course of his 28 years, Bruce has sat at the Council table alongside 18 others who have come and gone along the way. Since his debut, he has been a part of passing upwards of 50 bylaws, numerous policies, signed countless cheques, reports, declarations, agreements, authorizations - the list is endless - he has been a part of it and had his name attached to it, proudly.

Thank you Bruce for your contributions to the RM over the years and we wish you the very best in your retirement.



GORDON STANG
RM OF HEART'S HILL NO. 352
RETIREMENT

The RM of Heart's Hill No. 352 would like to recognize and thank Gordon Stang for his 33 years of service to the Municipality. Gordon started with the Municipality in 1992 as the Division 2 Councillor, following in his Father's footsteps. After 18 years in that position, he ran and was elected as Reeve, a role which he continued to hold for an additional 15 years. Gordon has participated on various committees over the years and seen the RM through many large projects! We thank him for his time on Council and wish him all the best in his retirement.

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