

Annual Convention Proceedings

March 7, 8, 9 and 10, 2005
Centennial Auditorium, Saskatoon

Attendance Statistics

Reeves & Councillors	1,173
Administrators	245
Other Visitors	850
Total	2,268
Municipalities Represented:	292

Tuesday, March 7, 2005

10:00 A.M.

President Neal Hardy called the convention to order. "O Canada" was sung and the invocation was given by Reverend Colin Clay.

President Hardy called upon Director Murray Purcell to pay the piper.

The Honourable Dr. Lynda Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, then gave the opening address. This was followed by the presentation of the Lieutenant Governor's Award, sponsored by Canada Post, to David Thompson, from the RM of Kellross No. 247

Past SARM Presidents Charlie Phelps and Sinclair Harrison were presented with the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal by the Lieutenant Governor.

Councillor Bev Dubois of the City of Saskatoon then gave an address of welcome. Premier Lorne Calvert brought congratulatory greetings for the Province on SARM's 100th Anniversary. Vice President David Marit gave the reply to the guest speakers. President Hardy introduced the fraternal delegates and the SARM Board of Directors.

The adoption of the agenda was followed by announcements by Executive Director Ken Engel. President Hardy delivered his opening address to the delegates and others present. The address is printed below in its entirety.

President's Address

Introduction

The SARM board would like to welcome everyone to SARM's 100th Centennial Convention. This is a very special convention with much to celebrate while at the same time looking back over the 100



*Greetings from the
Saskatchewan Urban
Municipalities Association*

We look forward to a strong relationship as we continue to work together to enhance the quality of life in Saskatchewan.





*Best wishes for a
successful Convention.*



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years of progress. In Saskatchewan, we have moved from a time when there were no roads only trails to the present-day network of 162,000 km of municipal roads to service 65M acres of cultivated and range land. We have moved from horsebacks to Cadillacs, from wagon box to Super B grain trucks, from telephones on the fence to satellite phones. We have many things to be proud of and many opportunities, but we still have our share of major problems to deal with in this province.

The next three days should be an exciting and interesting time, as we look back at our past history such as our centennial history book, the homesteader maps and the history museum, which you all contributed too. You are all invited to join us for our banquet on Wednesday night where we will take the time to recognize past board members and enjoy some great entertainment, country style. Also, there are many hospitality rooms such as Red Head, Kramer, Brandt & UMA tonight for your enjoyment. We want to thank all our sponsors for making this convention the biggest, the best and the most enjoyable of all of the 2005 celebrations.

I would like to recognize the work put into the convention by all of our staff and board members, especially Deb Gronning, for the hundreds of hours of time they put into getting ready for this conventions.

Over the last year, we have had many issues to deal with. The frost, BSE and poor commodity prices have all been extremely difficult for our farmers along with the continuing declines in farm income in our grain industry, the problems with the CAIS program and the federal push to change the structure of our seed industry have all been at the forefront of SARM's lobby efforts in 2004.

BSE

Although the opening of the border has been delayed again, I believe the new slaughter plants that are being proposed or are being built will provide stability in the future to the Canadian beef industry. An industry that can prosper and maintain itself, within our own borders.

Financial losses to the cattle industry due to BSE are estimated at \$5 B and the cost of federal-provincial aid to the Canadian livestock industry since May 2003 is estimated at approximately \$2 billion. Farmers currently have 1.6 M more head of cattle on their farms than they did in January 2003 but we are told that the cull cows and bulls is now only about 800,000 animals.

The federal government's repositioning the livestock strategy recognized SARM's lobby efforts for a cash advance for producers, a set-aside program to manage excess cattle and more money to expand domestic slaughter capacity. The 2005 federal budget further supports our lobby as we see it includes a 4-year extension of the cash advance program as well as the dedication of \$17 M towards expanding domestic slaughter capacity.

SARM continues to press both the provincial and federal governments to ensure funding is available for the industry. We continue to lobby for increased domestic slaughter capacity; the

removal of interprovincial trade restrictions and to have the restrictions on bluetongue and anaplasmosis completely removed on US cattle coming into Canada. In addition to these lobby efforts, SARM also holds a position on the Provincial BSE Advisory Committee and is able have input through those discussions as well.

Farm Income Situation

The farm income situation has also been a large focus of SARM's lobby efforts. SARM undertook two surveys of its members to determine the economic hurt producers in the grain industry were experiencing due to the August frost and years of compounded drought and poor grain prices.

The first survey was conducted in August to determine the severity of the crop damage resulting from the early August frost and excessive moisture. The survey results indicated that over 70 % of the 215 RM's that responded to the survey were impacted by the early August frost. 46% of these RM's rated their frost damage as widespread. The southwest corner of the province was the only part of the province that escaped damage.


The second survey was conducted in December to determine the severity of the compounded years of hurt and it's effect on the financial situation of our grain producers. Approximately 70 % of the total 228 RM's that responded to the survey reported severe crop damage in their area. 81% of the RMs reported farmers to be in an extremely poor financial situation and 81% reported a great

Protecting our Water - Together

The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority wishes to express its appreciation to members of the numerous Rural Municipalities who continue to assist in efforts to manage and protect source water quality and quantity throughout the province.

The past year has seen significant progress on many key activities. The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority looks forward to partnering with local governments to ensure safe and secure water supplies for all our residents.

Together, we are working to protect our water, now and into the future.

 Saskatchewan Watershed Authority

People working together as watershed stewards...

need for financial assistance to seed their 2005 crop. The results of this survey were presented to the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry in December.

Ag Canada came out with their farm income forecast for 2005 on February 16th and they are predicting more declines in farm income for our province. They are forecasting a realized net farm income of negative \$486 million for Saskatchewan in 2005. This follows up a negative \$166 million for 2004 and a negative \$264 million in 2003. In comparison to the income forecasts in the other provinces, Saskatchewan is by far, forecasted to have the lowest income in 2005.

Proposed Set-Aside Program

SARM has been hearing from its members on the critical income crisis they are facing. We have heard that many are being turned away from banks for loans, can't afford to pay down their current debts and many can't afford to seed their crops in 2005.

We had proposed a possible solution to this problem and feel that the only way to address it is to have a short-term and long-term strategy. The short-term strategy SARM has been focusing on is the Seeded Acreage Set-Aside Program. The details of this program were sent out to all RM's for your advice and direction. We only received a few responses and it seems that some were in favor of the set-aside the way it was outlined, some think we need to ask for an ad-hoc payment, some said the \$40 payment wasn't high enough, some said to remove the cap on acres, etc. What we need is some clear direction on whether or not we should promote it as a short-term solution.

I wanted to take a minute to go over what we outlined in the strategy and our reasoning behind it.

The reason we decided to go with a set-aside program is because in our discussions with the federal finance minister and many of the agricultural senators, they said there is no room to fund a straight ad-hoc payment.

The federal government bought into a set-aside for the cattle industry when they were struggling, so why not for the grains/oilseeds industry. The two main objectives of our set-aside program were to reduce grain/oilseed supplies to short the market and drive prices up. At the same time, producers would be provided with the cash they need to seed in 2005 through a payment by the federal and provincial government on acres that were set aside.

In order to be successful and to get both provincial and federal buy in on the program we needed a unified voice from Saskatchewan:

It would be a 1-year program to provide assistance in the short-term. Producers would be allowed to set aside 30% of their seeded acreage. There would be a government payment of \$40 for each acre of land the producer set-aside. We suggested that a cap be implemented on the number of acres that could be set-aside. We set the cap at 600 acres per producer. We determined this by

assuming that the average farm size in Saskatchewan was 1500-2000 acres and taking 30%.

We suggested that this set-aside be separate from the current set of APF programs and outside the current 60:40 federal/provincial funding formula. We suggested a 80:20 split.

We met with APAS to discuss the set-aside, attempting to achieve a "one-voice" lobby to go to government with. At first they agreed with it and then said no. Now APAS says they are pushing for immediate financial aid, but yet there is no definite indication as to what that might be (they have a paper which should outline that – waiting to get it from them).

We need to know where to go with this and what we should be lobbying for in the Short-term.

CAIS Program

In the long-term we have been looking at the CAIS program. On January 1, 2004 the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program replaced NISA and CFIP and became the only program available to producers when facing a decline in farm income. We are aware that CAIS has presented problems for producers since its inception. In 2004 SARM has lobbied the provincial government to have the CAIS program fully funded in Saskatchewan and to abolish the deposit requirement. In December 2003 I asked Prime Minister Martin to remove the deposit requirement. The fact that the federal government has stated that it now agrees with farmers that the CAIS deposit doesn't make sense is encouraging. That means they are aware that the current way the program is operating isn't working. However, this is only 1 small step towards fixing other problems with the program.

We also think that there are too many producers out there that CAIS isn't helping. The federal government has promised a formal review process for the CAIS program so effective adjustments can be made. SARM has requested to sit on this committee. Whether we get that seat or not, producers concerns need to be heard on this program. Most of you have had experiences dealing with the program and that is why we need your feedback. What problems are you having?

We have started to compile a list of the big issues we can take forward to this committee, but we want to make sure we have them all.

One of the biggest issues we are hearing is the fact that the reference margin calculation is not working. As the calculation only goes back 5 years, many producers due to years of drought, poor commodity prices, frost, etc. have an abnormally low reference margin, meaning that many don't trigger a payment.

Secondly is that many new farmers aren't triggering payments either as they don't have a reference margin to compare against.

Thirdly is that removing the high and the low years in the Olympic average calculation isn't working either. Five-year averaging of

income and expenses, then taking out the good and the disaster years, only results in an overall poor income. How can it improve if you never show the best year?

We have also heard many issues with the administration of the program. The forms are too difficult to fill out. It should be a program to help those that have a loss of income in a year may be able to qualify for assistance.

Please let us know what you have encountered, what you think needs to be changed so we can ensure your concerns are heard as this review gets underway in 2005.

2005 Crop Insurance

We have also watched as the 2005 Crop Insurance program was announced. Premiums are higher and coverage levels are lower for 2005. Average coverage per acre is dropping from \$79 to \$72/acre and the average premium is increasing by 9%. The north west corner of the province, risk area 20 is being hit the hardest with an on average premium increase of 46%.

Regulation of the Seed Industry

Lastly, SARM has been monitoring the federal push to change the way our seed industry is structured. There have been two major initiatives developing at the federal level that should be of great concern to producers as they may lead to higher costs for producers and restrict their use of common seed in the future.

First, there are the recommendations stemming from the Seed Sector Review. These recommendations imply that grain producers should start using more pedigreed seed. They do this by suggesting things that would make using common seed more costly. They want to tie the use of pedigreed seed to lower crop insurance premiums, larger market access & traceability. They even suggest that all salable seed should be tested and named by variety to be marketable. All of these things mean more costs for the producer and loss of the ability to reuse and sell their common seed.

It is our understanding that the CFIA will be considering these recommendations as they update the plant breeder's rights act & other seed industry regulations.

Second, is Agriculture Canada's intended shift in research focus. SARM has corresponded with AAFC directly and determined that the long-term plan of AAFC is to transfer new research initiatives at an earlier point in the equation to the private sector for completion. Currently, federal research is publicly funded, meaning that producers have invested dollars to have the new products developed and they are made available to producers at a low cost. If the private sector finishes developing these new products then they will own them & in order for producers to access them, they will have to pay royalties. These royalties would be in addition to the funds producers would have already paid through the public coffers for the initial stages of development. Both of these initiatives will be costly for producers. We addressed our concerns with these changes to the Senate Ag. Committee and the Federal Minister himself. SARM will continue to follow these initiatives as they develop.


Conservation Organizations

Another area of concern for farmers is the proposal by the province to change the farmland security act so that Ducks Unlimited can purchase an additional 60,000 acres over the next 5 years and 80,000 acres over the next 20 years and to increase the maximum number of acres in any RM to 4% or 52 ¼ sections of land per RM. SARM has proposed the following view:


1. That the area in any RM should not exceed 2%.
2. That any land that is sold to DU or other conservation groups be critical habitat as decided by an independent agency.
3. That compensation for losses by waterfowl or wild life be 100% of actual value.
4. that farmers be allowed to keep habitat land & be paid yearly to protect it.

Federal Hopper Car Fleet

Lastly, I want to touch on the proposed transfer of the federal hopper car fleet. SARM has been in full support of the Farmer Rail Car Coalition since it's inception and it will continue to stand by it until an announcement on car ownership is made. SARM still believes that transferring ownership to the FRCC is the only way to ensure that the cars will remain available for Western grain transportation into the future and that the cars will be well maintained and replaced when necessary are no additional cost to the producer. Transport Canada has indicated that there will be an announcement sometime this spring, maybe as early as March 21st.



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Other Ag Issues

These are just the main issues SARM has been focused on. Other issues such as high transportations costs and the implications of the WTO are some other issues SARM has been following. It is important that we hear back from you on these issues, so we have the grassroots input that needs to be heard in this province and in Ottawa.

SAMA Board

As you know there have been changes to the SAMA board. SARM appoints 2 representatives, who were elected at the mid-term, SUMA appoints 2 and the government appoints 5 so that the government now controls SAMA decisions. Also to get out SAMA for assessment purposes you will need the school boards approval and you know that will be near impossible with the amalgamated school divisions.

Lobbyist

These are the people at the federal level that keeps us up to date on what is happening in Ottawa so that we have an opportunity to have input into changes before they happen. These are also the people who open the doors for us at the federal government level from ministers to executive assistants to the people who develop the policy. With so many changes happening at the Federal level they are our eyes, ears and in many cases our advisors on how we should approach the federal government.

Consolidated Municipal Act

A new municipal act was drafted in 2004 with some changes to how we do things in an RM, but with most requirements the same, such as election dates, terms of office, residential exemptions. There are some new requirements, powers of a person, more decision-making bylaws where the RM sets the rules. Something we wanted in the act when municipalities that have formed an economic development area, they could loan money to an investor not just a grant, where these dollars could be repaid and used again. There are a few other concerns that we have but the minister has assured us that if they become an issue he will deal with them. The cities act had 80 changes to be made; most of them are changed in the new municipal act. For administrators they will see some changes but nothing that is not doable and should ultimately give more decision making power to the RM council. We are told that if an RM wanted everything to remain the same that they would only need to pass 3 bylaws, which should not be a problem.

Education Tax

Education tax on farmland continues to be an unsolved problem. At our rally at the legislature last June, the Premier promised that if we all helped get the equalization formula changed then 30% of these funds would go for education tax relief in 2004. There was no mention of an across the board rebate. As well, the Premier had stated at our 2004 convention that farm land was beyond a doubt, unfairly taxed. We had a working committee of SARM, SUMA and the province to put together recommendations on how the \$110 M could be shared. The province decided to split the money over 2

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years with nothing for 2004, but for 2005 and 2006. SARM calculation was that \$27 M of the 55M should be delegated to farmland and then the balance could be shared across the board. The government decided everyone should get a little... it works out to 8%, but many RM's with the new 2005 reassessment their assessment will increase 25% or more. This will still mean a large increase in education tax on farmland and the unfairness has not been dealt with.

Clearing the Path

I would like to inform you of what SARM has been doing to Clear the Path for Economic Development here in Saskatchewan. We know that whether you from a rural or urban municipality, our goals are the same – create the atmosphere for industry to develop in Saskatchewan, not only in Alberta and Manitoba. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for all their time and dedication in looking at what we can do for this province and rural Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan is an underdeveloped oasis. We probably have as many natural resources as Alberta and much more farm land. The committee recognized that to get industry to even look at Saskatchewan, the impediments that were here needed to be evaluated and removed.

The concept of the "Clearing the Path" was presented at the 2004 SARM Annual Convention. Two people from each of SARM's six divisions were elected to the committee at that convention. The committee also includes two members from RMAA (Don McCaullum and Kevin Ritchie), SUMA (Phil DeVos and Barry Gunther), the FSIN, and a provincial government representative as well as three SARM Board members. The objective of the committee was "to identify impediments to economic development within the existing municipal structure, legislation or policy and make recommendations for change".

An interim report was presented to the SARM Midterm Convention in November and the final report will be presented tomorrow. The committee has met five times as a whole for one to two days in duration with Paul Martin as a facilitator. Most of this time was devoted to meeting with various stakeholders, including the intensive livestock industry, the forestry industry, oil and gas industry, manufacturing sector, trucking industry, Chamber of Commerce and six different government departments. The committee was divided into two subcommittees – Transportation & Development.

The SUMA representatives were asked to bring forward the views of their organization. We knew that we all had to be in this together and have the same focus or it would be a waste of time and effort. When I say all, I mean the rural, urban and provincial governments.

The Clearing the Path Committee's goal was to clear the impediments that might keep economic development from occurring in our province, but to be sure that every community had the opportunity to be part of growing our province. We held the opposite view to ACRE. We believe that every municipality should have a chance to play a part, that every one be included, not excluded

and that boundaries would be decided by municipalities themselves, not by ACRE deciding if there should be 26-32 communities that are worth saving. We cannot build our province by writing off communities and the people who live in them.

Area development by sector should be how we approach building Saskatchewan. An example by sector would be that oil and gas in an area may be a part of one RM but they may also be part of another economic development area in regards to a slaughter plant where towns and cities may also be part of that sector. We do not want to limit any municipality from economic development, big or small.

Some stakeholders told us, no major impediments and some also identified areas of concern. However, the committee looked at some things that would hopefully make it easier to do business in rural Saskatchewan. These include regulations that would be the same for an area. For example the heavy oil area of the province. The RMs in that area have basically the same concerns and requirements regarding the oil industry. They could have the same regulations regarding road maintenance agreements, mill rate factors, etc., which would make it easier for the oil companies. Other areas of the province would have different needs. Another area that was being looked at is Primary Weight Corridors. Areas of the province that do not have access to primary weight highways are at a disadvantage when it comes to retaining & attracting businesses. The Prairie Grain Roads Program Committee has hired an engineering firm to develop a grain corridor system. This fits well with what the Clearing the Path Committee is looking at, that is making sure that if you have an industry coming to your area then access to primary weights is available.

Most of the stakeholders also identified impediments and challenges that are not within the jurisdiction of municipalities but of a provincial nature and major concern. Some of these included sales tax, corporate tax, personal income tax, the current labour laws, lack of communication between provincial departments, access to primary weight highways and a major one that was identified is the necessity for local access to health care services and K-12 schools. Without medical facilities and schools, businesses have a difficult time attracting and retaining employees who will relocate in rural Saskatchewan. The current forced amalgamation of rural school divisions down to thirteen is a major concern and may become one of the biggest impediments to economic development in rural Saskatchewan. It is totally opposite to what we are trying to do with our Clearing the Path Project.

From SARM's point of view, we could sit back and let the province decide what they would like Saskatchewan to look like in the future, or we could start our own economic development areas as one of the tools to create opportunities and jobs here in the province. We know that our raw materials come from the rural, but we also know that our services come from the villages, towns and cities. RMs need to provide the services necessary to access our raw materials with infrastructure such as roads and access to these materials – whether it be gas, oil, wood, potash, diamonds, oil shale or our 65 million acres of farm land. The urbans need to supply the services

we need. If we all work together, both urban and rural and let all of Saskatchewan be part of this, we all will win.

Clearing the path is not a be-all, end-all, but it is a plan that both rural and urban can build on to bring new jobs and opportunities to our province. Clearing the path so we can build our future is a good start.

Maybe it is time for SUMA and SARM to look at how we will need to function in the future, how we as communities whether rural or urban can play a part in Saskatchewan's future.

Closing Remarks

In closing, we have all the natural resources to make our province a province of opportunity, a province to grow and prosper. Building on our strengths of oil and gas and farming and using the many other natural resources we have, there is no reason why we cannot create the jobs to keep our young people in Saskatchewan and in the next 100 years be the envy of all of Canada. Have a fun filled and exciting convention, celebrating our past and looking to our future.

Don Schlosser, President of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, and Wayne Black, President of the Saskatchewan Municipal Insurance Association presented prints to SARM President Neal Hardy in recognition of SARM's 100th Anniversary.

Certificates were presented to number of rural municipal officials who had completed all the modules under the Municipal Leadership Development Program.

Vice-President David Marit and Director Debra Gronning officially unveiled the SARM 100th Anniversary History Book.

11:45 a.m.

The convention recessed for lunch.

1:30 p.m.

Tim Leurer, RMAA Director for Division 4, presented trophies to the winners of the RMAA's Provincial Curling playdowns.

1:45 p.m.

Ann MacLean, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, gave a report on behalf of FCM.

2:00 p.m.

Bill Hyde, Sask Power, gave a presentation on behalf of the company and introduced the keynote speaker. David Broadfoot who addressed the delegates.

3:35 p.m.

Honourable Len Taylor, Minister of Government Relations addressed the delegates.

4:00 p.m.

Ken Engel, SARM Executive Director and Kathie Caleval, SARM Manager of Insurance gave a presentation on Coverage of Special Events under the SARM Liability Self-Insurance Program.

4:15 p.m.

Daryl Senecal and John Wagner, rural representatives on the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA) Board gave a report on the agency.

4:30 p.m.

Terry Hildebrandt, President of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) addressed the delegates.

5:00 p.m.

The convention was recessed to reconvene at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2005.

Wednesday, March 8, 2005

9:00 a.m.

President Hardy called the convention to order.

Resolutions 1-05A through 4-05A and 7-05A through 14-05A were debated.

9:45 a.m.

The Premier of Saskatchewan, Honourable Lorne Calvert, addressed the convention.

10:35 a.m.

The 19th Annual Bear Pit Session with the provincial cabinet took place.

12:00 p.m.

The convention was recessed for lunch.

1:20 p.m.

Kevin Ritchie, President of the Rural Municipal Administrators Association addressed the delegates.

1:45 p.m.

The Clearing the Path Committee's report was presented to the delegates. Kevin Hursh facilitated the session.

4:00 p.m.

The convention recessed for the day to reconvene at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 9, 2005.

Thursday, March 9, 2005

9:00 a.m.

President Hardy called the convention to order and introduced Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Finance who addressed the delegates.

9:45 a.m.

Executive Director, Ken Engel presented the financial statements of the association for 2004.

It was moved and carried that the 2006 Annual Convention be held in Regina, at the Centre of the Arts, March 7th to 10th.

10:00 a.m.

Dr. Jim Dosman, Institute of Agricultural, Rural and Environmental Health, reported on the Agricultural Health and Safety Network. As well, he presented Dana Serblowski of the RM of Bayne No. 371 with the 10th annual SARM 90th Anniversary Student Essay Award.

Returning Officer Kevin Ritchie declared David Marit re-elected by acclamation.

10:20 a.m.

Resolutions 15-05A through 17-05A were debated.

10:30 a.m.

Brad Wall, Leader of the Saskatchewan Party addressed the delegates.

11:05 a.m.

Keith Comstock, Department of Government Relations, gave a presentation on the proposed new *Municipalities Act*.

11:45 a.m.

The convention recessed for lunch.

1:10 p.m.

Wayne Black, President, Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Association, gave a report on the association.

1:20 p.m.

David Karwacki, Leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party addressed the delegates.

1:30 p.m.

Resolution 5-05A, 6-05A and 18-05A through 22-05A were debated.

2:00 p.m.

Individual meetings for each division were held. Ray Orb was declared elected as Director for Division 2, Jim Hallick as Director for Division 4 and Debra Gronning as Director for Division 6.

3:15 p.m.

Resolutions 23-05A to 29-0A and Point of Privilege Resolutions 1 to 8 were debated.

The convention was adjourned.

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