

Message from the President



As we officially entered our second century, SARM maintained its traditional role as the voice of rural Saskatchewan in municipal and agricultural issues. In 2006, rural sustainability and new opportunities were the driving force of SARM's agenda. As we build on our past century of success, we look brightly towards the future to build sustainable rural communities, economies and culture.

As the voice of rural Saskatchewan, SARM acts on behalf of our members, providing leadership and advocating viable rural policies before senior governments. In my first term as President, I took pride in my role representing our members on these important issues.

In 2006, municipal infrastructure was a top priority. Initiatives such as the Prairie Grain Roads Program (PGRP) and the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) have been valuable to RMs in building sustainable infrastructure.

The Clearing the Path (CTP) program made significant advances in 2006. On the transportation side, the sub-committee drafted a primary weight corridor map that will provide strategic linkages to the current road network to provide more communities with primary weight access. The Development Subcommittee unveiled the Municipal Capacity Development Program to provide resources to aid municipalities in implementing CTP recommendations that will foster economic development in their communities.

Agriculture continued to be a vital issue for SARM members. As the agriculture industry remains the backbone of our rural communities, SARM takes our role as advocates for agriculture policy very seriously. We worked with the government and moved forward on several agriculture

issues this past year. We are encouraged by the federal government's public commitments to address develop a long-term disaster program separate from a renewed income stabilization program, and we will continue to provide input into new policy framework.

The biofuels industry gained significant momentum in 2006. SARM ardently pushed the federal government to move forward on a biofuels strategy that includes incentives for producer participation and ownership, facilities in rural communities, and the use of Canadian products. We were pleased with the federal government's Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative (BOPI) program and the Capital Formation Assistance Program for Renewable Fuels Production that will provide incentives for producer ownership in biofuels facilities.

SARM enjoys a good working relationship with all levels of government on these many issues. We have seen success through joint initiatives, such as Clearing the Path, that would not be possible without the cooperation of SUMA, the Province, and federal government funding. Cooperation amongst our fellow municipal organizations and provincial and federal governments is vital to achieving our goals and growing Saskatchewan communities.

In my first term as president, I have had the opportunity to work with a devoted board of directors and would like to thank them for their support and efforts in making SARM an effective and successful organization. I would also like to thank SARM members for their contributions and dedication to rural Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

David Marit
President

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