



2007 ANNUAL SARM CONVENTION

HIGHLIGHTS

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March 12 - 15, 2007 - TCU Place, Saskatoon

Monday, March 12 - Highlights

Registration Reception

On Monday, March 12, SARM held its registration reception, sponsored by the Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance Association. Over 1000 people registered and browsed the 110 Trade Show Booths.

Tuesday, March 13 - Highlights

The convention opened on Tuesday morning. There were 1700 delegates, guests and visitors in attendance throughout the day.

Lieutenant Governor Opens Convention

His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, Dr. Gordon Barnhart, gave a kind welcome to guests and convention delegates. His Honour talked about the history of our province and the importance of agriculture and the rural lifestyle to Saskatchewan. He stressed the significance of serving in public life, and commended the reeves and councillors for their contributions.

Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan

Gord Nystuen of SaskPower, who sponsored the award, gave a warm introduction to the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan, Robert Webb. Bob was a Reeve for the RM of Big Quill No. 308 for 26 years. He is certainly a deserving recipient, and is a man dedicated to his community, having served several years on many boards and committees.

Mr. Webb was presented with a Dave Hengen painting, and his wife of over 50 years, Kathy, was presented with a bouquet from Her Honour, Naomi Barnhart.

President's Address

President Marit reported on the Association's activities over the past year.

President Marit commented on rural issues such as infrastructure and agriculture. He focused on the importance of maintaining and growing partnerships with other organizations and governments. He pointed to successes such as Clearing the Path and challenges such as potential school closures.

President Marit highlighted the potential biofuels industry as an opportunity for the agriculture sector and disasters such as flooding and drought as challenges for producers, industry and governments.

The President closed by thanking partner organizations and governments for their cooperation, as well as the SARM board, staff and members for their dedication and support.

Report from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Delegates heard from Third Vice-President, Mayor Basil Stewart from Summerside, PEI. He presented on the many similarities between PEI and Saskatchewan and praised the municipal leaders of Saskatchewan and thanked provincial FCM members.

He brought SARM delegates up to date on several FCM issues such as the federal gas tax revenue and the federal fiscal imbalance. He also pointed out that the responsibilities of municipal governments exceed their ability to access funding, especially in rural and small communities.

RMAA Curling Presentation

The 2007 Provincial Municipal Curling Competition wrapped up on March 12, with 85 teams contending, representing thirty per cent of the RMs in Saskatchewan. Kim McIvor, RMAA Director of Division 1, announced the winners from the RM of McKillop No. 220. The winning team members were Skip Marvin Kelln, Third Barb Griffin, Second Nelson Swanston, and Lead Norm Smith.

Honourable Carol Skelton, Minister of National Revenue

Honourable Carol Skelton, Minister of National Revenue addressed delegates and brought greetings from the Federal Government. She stressed that local municipal leaders are outstanding citizens and that the federal government is committed to continuing to help and work with them to ensure that the quality of rural life is the best in this country.

Keynote Speaker Michael Kerr

Delegates heard keynote speaker, Michael Kerr, talk about rural life in Canada. He talked about creating an exciting work environment and stressed that we have the power to choose our attitudes. He said that the sense of humour is the most undervalued human resource and is one of the most truly human characteristics. He suggests that we need to tap into it to create a positive work environment and lightening up on ourselves, not to mention the many health benefits of laughter.

Honourable Harry Van Mulligen, Minister of Government Relations

The Honourable Harry Van Mulligen, Minister of Government Relations touched on many challenges that municipalities face in the many different areas of the province.

Minister Van Mulligen congratulated Clearing the Path committee members on all of their hard work and success with the program and the creation of the proposed Primary Weight Corridor. He also referenced the Premier's \$5 billion Transportation for Economic Advantage Plan announcement on March 6, which clearly referenced rural economic corridors.

Regarding infrastructure, Minister Van Mulligen said that the provincial government will know the exact amount of funding for programs within the next few days and that the provincial government intends to work with municipalities to address infrastructure needs, including the Municipal Asset Information Tracking system.

Regarding property taxes, the government has addressed part of the issue with their 38 per cent. If the Prime Minister keeps his equalization promise, they may be able to do more. He reaffirmed the province's commitment of 30 percent of the possible equalization funds for additional property tax relief.

Achieving Results for SARM Through Lobbying Efforts

Cathy Jo Noble, Account Director for Hill and Knowlton, a Public Affairs group in Ottawa, addressed delegates on Tuesday afternoon. She explained how Hill and Knowlton provides guidance through the "maze" which we commonly refer to as the federal government.

Brad Wall, Leader of the Saskatchewan Party

Brad Wall, Leader of the Saskatchewan Party addressed delegates Tuesday afternoon along with Saskatchewan Party MLAs Glen Hart, Greg Brkich, and Yogi Huyghebaert.

Mr. Wall focused on four key areas – education, agriculture, infrastructure, and renewed vision for rural Saskatchewan.

Regarding education, Mr. Wall talked of an outdated taxation system, the need for property tax relief, and concerns over rural school closures.

Mr. Wall pointed to long-term programs necessary to sustain the agriculture sector and the need and opportunity for Saskatchewan to be a leading innovator in agriculture programming and research.

Mr. Wall stated the Saskatchewan party's position that revenue sharing funds should not be dictated by a municipality's population.

He concluded his address with a focus on future opportunities for rural Saskatchewan and the need for renewed vision.

Wednesday, March 14 - Highlights

A total of 1923 reeves, councillors, administrators, visitors and guests, from 293 RMs have registered at the 2007 SARM Annual Convention.

Honourable Lorne Calvert, Premier of Saskatchewan

Premier Calvert spoke to delegates on the many issues that affect Saskatchewan residents and producers today.

He first commended SARM for being the voice of rural Saskatchewan and commented that it has been a good year for rural Saskatchewan. He spoke of the exciting things happening such as economic prosperity, small business growth, and the biofuels industry. He gave credit to SARM for leading the way.

He also spoke of the challenges for rural Saskatchewan and the series of difficult and serious blows producers have been faced with the last few years.

Regarding disaster relief, the Premier reaffirmed the province's commitment to move to a 90-10 federal-provincial funding of a program to deal with these difficult circumstances.

The Premier announced that in the upcoming spring budget, there will be new resources for revenue sharing, but could not give details of the program.

Regarding equalization, the Premier reiterated that the Province just wants Saskatchewan's fair share. He stated that every other province in Canada has been fully allowed to benefit from their unique resources, such as hydro, except Saskatchewan. The Province has committed thirty per cent of any new money from equalization to lowering education taxes on property.

The Premier also announced \$10 million in new funding for Saskatchewan rural municipalities, in addition to ongoing revenue sharing, for infrastructure in two new programs to be delivered through the Department of Highways and Transportation (DHT) and the Department of Government Relations (GR).

The first program, delivered through DHT, will provide RMs in the heavy oil area with \$5 million to assist in providing roads to service the resource. The Province will assess circumstances around the province and decide where else funding should be applied.

The second program, delivered through Government Relations, will provide another \$5 million for a new municipal primary weight corridor program. This will grow to \$10 million in 2008 – 2009.

The Premier gave credit to SARM and SUMA for their work on the Clearing the Path program and the proposed CTP Primary Weight Corridor.

Bear-Pit Session with Provincial Cabinet

Cabinet members in attendance at the bear pit session were Honourable Mark Wartman, Minister of Agriculture and Food, Honourable Eldon Lautermilch, Minister of Highways and Transportation,

Honourable Deb Higgins, Minister of Learning, Honourable Harry Van Mulligen, Minister of Government Relations, Honourable John Nilson, Minister of Environment, and Premier Lorne Calvert. Some of the questions asked by delegates were on education tax, drought relief, vehicle rescue fund, and school closures.

Resolutions Session

The following resolutions were debated and voted on as follows:

- 1-07A – ILO Road Maintenance Agreements - **Carried**
- 2-07A – Funding of Surfaced Roads - **Carried**
- 3-07A – MEPP Retirement Declaration - **Lost**
- 4-07A – Gravel Extraction Fees - **Carried**
- 5-07A – Road Maintenance and Restoration Agreement Regulations – **Carried**
- 6-07A – Bridge Repair or Replacement Program – **Carried (as amended)**
- 7-07A – RM Election Procedures - **Lost**
- 8-07A – ADD Board Funding – **Carried**
- 9-07A – Scentless Chamomile - **Carried**
- 10-07A – *The Stray Animals Act* – **Carried**

The Future of Rural K-12 Education Panel Session

The South East Cornerstone School Division participated in a panel session with delegates. Board Chair Audrey Trombley, Vice-Chair Carol Flynn, Superintendent of Finance and Administration Lionel Dietrich, and Director Doug Rempel, of the SE Cornerstone School Division made up the panel, and Jeff Hryhoriw moderated the session. The panel talked about the challenges facing the future of K-12 education in rural communities.

Clearing the Path

Richard (Porky) Porter, Chair of the CTP Transportation Subcommittee, gave an update on the CTP Primary Weight Corridor and thanked the Premier for his announcement of \$5 million and the commitment of \$10 million per year starting in 2008.

Tim Cheesman, manager of the Municipal Capacity Development Program, gave an overview of the newly implemented program and introduced the two new development officers, Jarad Hermanson and Shelley Skelding.

Workshops

There were three workshops held. Jo-Ann Carignan-Vallee, Trail Coordinator, hosted a workshop called TransCanada Trails; Mike Morris, SARM Manager of Legal Services facilitated a workshop entitled Current Legal Issues of Interest to RMs; and Bob Ross, Manager of Workplace Safety Unit and Doug Santha, Team Leader in Workplace Responsibilities Systems, together hosted a workshop called Occupational Health and Safety.

SARM Banquet and Entertainment

Over 580 tickets were sold for the SARM Wednesday night Banquet, featuring entertainment by Comedian Jebb Fink. CIBC Wood Gundy sponsored the banquet and the entertainment was sponsored by New Holland.

Thursday, March 15 - Highlights

Financial Report

Ken Engel, SARM Executive Director gave the Financial Report of the Association. The association is in a good financial position for 2007 and is functioning effectively.

Municipal Leadership Development Program

President David Marit presented 41 delegates in attendance with their Municipal Leadership Development Program completion certificates. Each municipal leader presented with a certificate has completed all five modules in the program.

Report of the Institute of Agricultural, Rural and Environmental Health

Dr. Jim Dosman, Director of the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, formerly the Institute of Agricultural, Rural and Environmental Health, along with Leanne LaBrash, from the Centre, presented Kelsey Christopher, from the RM of Coulee No. 136, with the SARM scholarship for an essay she had written on farm health and safety on their family ranch.

There are 166 RMs in the Agriculture Health and Safety Network program. The program is integral in educating farm families of dangers that lie on their very own farms.

Elections for President and Vice-President

David Marit was elected President of SARM, and Jim Hallick won the Vice-Presidency, both by acclamation.

Organ Donation Presentation

Jim Angus, Administrator from the RM of Harris No. 316, made a presentation to delegates on the organ donation program in Canada. He reported on the national average of 14 people in 1 million who become donors, and stressed that there are not enough donors for the people who need organs.

Anthrax Presentation

Dr. Sandra Stephens, Veterinary Program Specialist for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, gave a presentation on anthrax disease and how it affects animals. Dr. Stephens went through a history of the disease and how it is spread. She also stressed that anthrax is a reportable disease and any suspected cases should be reported. She also talked about mitigating the risks of anthrax by vaccination, restricting access to areas that are high risk, and proper carcass disposal.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers

Doug Coleman, Coordinator for the Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers and Brian Cobb, Past-President and volunteer for the Crime Stoppers Board addressed delegates. They thanked rural municipalities for their support and provided a short overview of the Crime Stoppers program.

Resolutions Session

The following resolutions were debated and voted on as follows:

11-07A – Responsibility for Controlling and Extinguishing Fires – **Carried**

12-07A – Hunter Host Policy – **Carried (as amended)**

13-07A – Fuel Tax Exemption – **Carried (as amended)**

14-07A – Participation in Regional Libraries – **Lost**

15-07A – Restricted Drilling Zones – **Carried**

16-07A – Building Communities Program – **Carried**

Report of the Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance Association

Wayne Black, President of the SMHIA gave an update on the Association's activities and introduced their Board for 2007. He thanked RMs for the support and wished them well in the upcoming season.

Report of the Rural Municipal Administrators Association

Kevin Ritchie, President of the RMAA introduced the current executive of the RMAA, and announced the former SARM President Neal Hardy will be the 2007 recipient of the Lou Jacobs Award at the RMAA Annual Convention in May. Mr. Ritchie also updated SARM delegates on the Associations activities over the last year. President Ritchie also announced his intention not to seek re-election at their upcoming convention in May. We thank Kevin for his many years of dedicated service to both the RMAA and SARM.

Resolutions Session

The following resolutions were debated and voted on as follows:

17-07A – Biofuels Opportunity – **Carried**

18-07A – Recreation Facilities Power Costs – **Carried**

19-07A – Rural Telephone Service – **Carried**

20-07A – Census of Agriculture – **Carried**
POP1-07A – Environmental Stewardship Compensation – **Carried**
POP2-07A – Elk and Deer Population in Farmland Areas – **Carried**
POP3-07A – Use of Lift Axles – **Carried**
POP4-07A – PDAP Rates – **Carried**
POP5-07A – Allocation of Excise Tax – **Carried**
POP6-07A – Road Construction, Maintenance, and Improvements Allocations – **Carried**
POP7-07A – Drafting of a Long-term Disaster Program – **Carried**
POP8-07A – Payments for Producers Affected by Weather Related Disasters – **Carried**
POP9-07A – School Closure Moratorium – **Carried**
POP10-07A – Speed Limit When Passing Municipal Equipment and Employees – **Carried**

District Meetings

Division meetings were held in all six divisions. Elections for Directors were in Divisions 2, 4, and 6. There was one nomination in Division 2, and Ray Orb was elected by acclamation. In Division 4, Harvey Malanowich retained his seat as Director, winning by acclamation, and in Division 6, Director Darryl Senecal also won by acclamation.

CAA Travel Certificate

Throughout the Trade Show, reeves, councillors and administrators found their names on prize boards to enter in a draw for a travel certificate. The CAA Travel Agency has generously sponsored this prize for the last 13 years. Congratulations to Ken Klein, Councillor for the RM of Chesterfield No. 261 for winning the travel certificate.