



SASKATCHEWAN ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

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Rural Highlights: Provincial Budget 2012-13

For Municipalities/Infrastructure:

- \$237.4 million in Revenue Sharing equal to one full point of Provincial Sales Tax (PST) based on the 2010-11 Public Accounts, an increase of \$20.6 million or 9.5 per cent from the previous year and up 87 per cent from 2007-08;
- \$56.1 million in flow-through municipal infrastructure funding provided by the Gas Tax Program;
- \$48.4 million to meet project commitments under the various federal-provincial infrastructure programs. This funding level accounts for a reduction of \$21.9 million due to the completion of the federal stimulus programs in 2011-12;
- \$6.1 million, an increase of \$500,000 to meet program commitments under the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative; and,
- \$12.3 million, an increase of \$500,000 for Grants-in-Lieu of Property Tax. Overall funding to municipalities in 2012-13 will be \$348.9 million, up 14.8 per cent from last year and up 60.9 per cent from 2007-08.
- Maintained Municipal Roads for the Economy Program (MREP) funding of 23.5 million.
- A new rental housing construction initiative providing a 10-year rebate of Corporate Income Tax equal to 10 per cent of the expected rental income from new multi-unit residential rental projects
- Over 16 million to be spent in 2012-2013 to assist with flood damages.
 - \$5.0 million to extend the 2011 Emergency Flood Damage Reduction Program to 2012
 - \$2.1 million in one-time funding for the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program to address the backlog in claims from 2011.
- \$70.5 million for upgrades under the Rural Highway Strategy – including primary weight upgrades on 150 km to be completed and \$10.3 million to upgrade community and tourism access roads
- A new community rink affordability grant of \$2,500 is being provided for approximately 750 community rinks across the province, at a cost of \$1.9 million.
- The Province also announced that, as of January 1, 2013, discounts can no longer be applied to the Education Property Tax (EPT) portion of municipal property taxes; this change is meant to address a shortfall in funds earmarked for the education sector (savings of \$16 million).

Healthcare:

A portion of the Saskatchewan student loans for new doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners will be forgiven (up to \$120,000 for doctors and up to \$20,000 for nurses and nurse practitioners) that practice in under-served rural and remote communities for five years. This Budget also includes funding to implement the recent and previous commitments for medical training seats:

- Five new Nurse Practitioner training seats will be introduced as part of the new commitment for 20 new training seats;
- \$10.3 million to expand Registered Nurse training seats by 170 seats – 85 seats will be added in 2012-13; and,
- In 2012-13, the government will have fulfilled its commitments to both the medical training seat expansion to 100 and the physician residency seat expansion to 120.

As well, \$1.5 million will be invested to implement a rural physician locum pool to improve access to physician care, as promised in the election platform.

- This initiative will encourage a dedicated resource of physicians providing services in rural Saskatchewan in addition to the existing short-term locum pool.

An increase of \$5.5 million is provided for the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) Helicopter Ambulance service for start-up and initial operating costs. This service will focus on care and transport of critically ill or injured patients in rural and remote areas of the province.

Agriculture:

- Enhanced Crop Insurance Program, including unseeded average benefit of up to 100.00 per eligible acre.
- Full funding of AgriStability and AgriInvest, and Crop Insurance, budgeted at \$321.4 million in 2012-13, an increase of \$600,000.
- Crop insurance coverage levels are rising to a record high of \$174 per acre on average, nearly double what they were in 2007. In response to the unprecedented flooding in 2010 and 2011, producers now have the option to supplement the Unseeded Acreage Benefit of \$70 per eligible acre by purchasing either \$15 or \$30 per acre in additional coverage.
- In addition, the federal-provincial Growing Forward programs will get a boost of \$11.8 million in new funding. Work is well underway to further the commitment to rehabilitate provincial irrigation assets. This budget includes \$5.0 million, an increase of \$1.9 million, to accelerate rehabilitation of the M1 Canal over 10 years.
- The Ministry of Agriculture will also provide an additional \$1.0 million for international market development and trade advocacy. This funding will provide industry support to maintain existing markets, develop new markets and attract new buyers to the province.
- The provincial government is continuing to provide funding to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) to deliver beaver and wild boar control programs.
 - Funding to SARM for rat control is also increasing by \$250,000 to \$1 million, an 85 per cent increase since 2007. In addition, producers will benefit from the Gopher Control Rebate Program, which is continuing in 2012-13.

Other Tidbits:

- \$48.4 million for various federal-provincial infrastructure programs, and \$2.8 million for Building Communities recreational infrastructure.
- Graduate Retention Program - refund of tuition costs to graduates to stay and work in SK.
- New SK Advantage Scholarship to help recent high school graduates 4.6 million by providing new high school graduates with up to \$2000 over 4 years to be applied to education costs at any post-secondary institution.
- Expanding the PST exemption for those 17 years old and under on clothing etc.
- Cease funding Enterprise Regions- savings of 4 million per year.