

Municipalities Benefit from New Energy Efficiency Initiatives

Watch for more energy efficient facilities across Saskatchewan, with up to \$5.9 million over five years in new funding being provided for the Saskatchewan Research Council's Office of Energy Conservation (OEC) as part of the province's *Green Strategy*. The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding with OEC and Saskatchewan Property Management (SPM) to participate in and promote a pair of new energy programs.

"The funding available through these programs can be used for projects such as solar water heating for municipal swimming pools, replacing lighting with more energy efficient systems, high-efficiency heating systems and a variety of items for curling and skating rinks," Environment Minister and Minister Responsible for OEC John Nilson said. "These programs build on an initiative delivered by OEC where assessments led to recommendations for municipalities to install more efficient lighting technologies for their facilities."

The MOU provides an opportunity for municipalities to take advantage of a bulk purchasing discount that SPM arranged for lighting technology. Since 2003, 182 municipalities have been assessed by OEC and 537 facilities have received lighting recommendations. These recommended upgrades could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1717 tonnes, and save \$146,475 in energy costs annually. The Municipal Energy Efficiency Initiative will provide \$400,000 each year for these types of lighting upgrades and adds two more areas of potential return with Heating System Upgrades and Demand Side Equipment Management Upgrades for Rinks.

"OEC has had excellent success in facilitating this program over the last several years," SRC President and CEO, Dr. Laurier Schramm said. "With these expanded programs we expect further measurable, energy savings and greenhouse gas emission reductions."

"We are pleased to be part of the new Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Energy Conservation," said SARM President David Marit. "The expanded program will help municipalities make their facilities more energy efficient, which will result in operating cost savings."

The Solar Heating Initiative for Today (SHIFT) is a new program that will provide funding for new solar water heating systems to large, non-residential consumers of hot water in Saskatchewan. The \$700,000 per year program is available for businesses, industries, multiple-unit residential buildings over three stories, public institutions such as hospitals and schools, and municipal and provincial facilities.

"SUMA is very pleased to see this program made available," said SUMA President Allan Earle. "As part of a larger plan to create sustainable communities throughout Saskatchewan, urban municipalities are working hard to implement energy saving

practices into their municipal operations. Investments in energy reduction projects always make good financial sense in the long run, but often the cost is more than the taxpayer can afford in the short term. This program will assist our members in pursuing those alternatives and realizing the cost saving benefits of energy efficient systems."

The new Saskatchewan SHIFT program matches the 25 per cent funding on eligible project costs that is available from an existing federal initiative. Funding will be the lesser amount of 25 per cent of eligible project costs (40 per cent in remote communities) or \$80,000.

Applications for SHIFT will be made jointly with the federal ecoENERGY for Renewable Heat, which is administered by Natural Resources Canada. The criteria are identical and each program limits the overall governmental funding that may be used for any solar water heater installation project.

Applicants for both the Municipal Energy Efficiency and SHIFT initiatives are required to give consent for OEC to track energy consumption records for one year prior to the upgrades and 10 years after the work has been done. Funding through these initiatives is planned for disbursement for eligible retrofits undertaken between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2011.

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