

Manitoba PC Caucus

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Manitobans

Week in Review

FIRST PHASE OF MINISTER'S PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS WRAP UP IN WINNIPEG

Manitoba's new government has heard from hundreds of Manitobans who attended recently completed in-person pre-budget meetings across the province, Finance Minister Cameron Friesen (MLA for Morden-Winkler) said this week.

"Manitobans were enthusiastic in sharing their input and ideas as we begin the necessary and hard work of fixing our finances, repairing our services and rebuilding the economy," said Friesen. "From conversations about supporting small businesses to investing in the north, reducing red tape and investing in education, skills and training, we heard about the priorities Manitobans want to see in Budget 2017."

Formal presentations from 50 stakeholders representing the business community, rural municipalities and towns, post-secondary institutions, non-profit organizations, health-care providers, First Nations organizations, the arts, sports and francophone communities, and organized labour were heard by an all-party panel and interested Manitobans. Thousands more have submitted their ideas through an interactive budget website and citizen budget tool which will

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continue to welcome the input and ideas of Manitobans until Dec. 1, the minister noted.

In-person pre-budget consultation meetings were held between Oct. 17 and 26 in Winnipeg, Brandon, Swan River and Thompson as part of the strategy to include all Manitobans in the creation of Budget 2017. Constituency consultations hosted by PC MLAs will also take place in the coming weeks and months.

"Our government inherited significant fiscal challenges resulting from unsustainable growth in spending under the previous administration. We know that we cannot put Manitoba back on a course to a sustainable economic future without the input of Manitobans," said Friesen. "We asked Manitobans to be our partners in this important pre-budget work and we are thrilled with the response our initiatives have received."

The strategy also includes an interactive budget website and a citizen budget tool to help Manitobans learn first-hand about the budget process. The website, www.YourProvinceYourPlan.ca, features an interactive tool that allows individuals to build their own provincial budget on a computer or smart phone. The minister noted Manitoba is the first province in Canada to use this tool for public consultations.

HEALTH MINISTERS MEET IN TORONTO

Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Kelvin Goertzen (MLA for Steinbach) attended a two-day meeting with provincial, territorial and federal officials that focused on securing long-term funding and innovation, and ensuring a sustainable health-care system for all Canadians.

“We recognize that every province faces its own unique challenges associated with the different demographics of their particular province,” said Goertzen. “In Manitoba’s experience, the health-care challenges associated with our large and growing Indigenous population and the remote nature of much of our province result in significant cost pressures around health-care delivery. Our expectation would be the federal government recognize the unique challenges of each province and will provide long-term, flexible funding to allow provinces to deliver health care appropriately within their own jurisdictions.”

The minister stressed that health-care needs are not the same in every province, noting that chronic disease affects Manitoba in particular. Goertzen renewed a call from premiers for a first ministers meeting with the prime minister to deal with the need to establish a long-term, predictable and flexible funding mechanism for health care.



PROVINCE CELEBRATES WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH, HONOURS WOMEN IN POLICING

The Manitoba government celebrated Women’s History Month with a special reception and panel discussion at the Legislative Building recognizing the 100th anniversary of the first female constable with the Winnipeg Police Service, Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister Rochelle Squires (MLA for Riel), minister responsible for the status of women, said last week.

“For many years, police work was a male-dominated field and the elusive brass-ceiling was very hard to shatter,” said Squires. “Today we celebrate the women who shattered that ceiling and opened the doors for many other women to follow. Thanks to these trailblazers, police organizations have recognized the value of diversity and have worked to recruit women and other under-represented groups.”

Women’s History Month is held nationally in October to celebrate the advances and contributions of women in all facets of Canadian life. The minister noted the annual celebration provides an opportunity to recognize the many achievements by Manitoba women and reflect on the progress that continues to be made in ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all citizens.

HOLODOMOR MOBILE CLASSROOM VISITS THE MANITOBA LEGISLATURE

Students, teachers and members of the public gathered at the Legislative Building grounds to learn about the Holodomor with the Holodomor National Awareness Tour’s Holodomor Mobile Classroom (HMC) - a state-of-the-art vehicle that provides an interactive learning environment to engage and educate people about the Holodomor. More information about the Holodomor National Awareness Tour and mobile classroom is available at <https://holodomortour.ca/>.

Manitoba PC Caucus **Week in Review**

CAUCUS EDITORIAL: RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOVERNMENT WITH COMPENSATION DISCLOSURE LEGISLATION

Our new government is committed to new measures to ensure accountability to Manitobans. As part of our Open Government Initiative, we have introduced legislation with specific steps to restore the transparency and accountability lost under the previous NDP administration's decade of debt, decay and decline.

Our Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act will require disclosure of payments to political staff when their employment begins and ends. This will also apply to secondment contracts and severance payments for technical officers who are hired to undertake the work of our new Progressive Conservative government.

The NDP tried to cover up six-figure payouts to political staff so they would leave their jobs voluntarily following that party's leadership fiasco in 2015. Public accounts reveal seven NDP political staff received a total of \$1,425,866 for approximately eight months' work in 2014/15, including close to \$700,000 in lump sum 'departure tax' political payouts.

At the request of our Progressive Conservative Caucus, the Manitoba Ombudsman investigated the NDP cover-up. The Ombudsman's investigation revealed the political payouts were not based on layoffs, terms of employment or employment contracts, but were negotiated to resolve a "labour relations dispute."

Manitobans are now finding out it was standard procedure under the NDP to spare no expense in using public money to deal with political problems.

Our government's legislation will require the employment documents and severance payments of technical officers be made public within 30 days of being paid out. We are also back-dating this change to the day we were sworn in, ensuring we will be more accountable than any other previous Manitoba government.

Manitobans rightly expect integrity and transparency from their government. With this legislation, we are following the Ombudsman's direction that "compensation paid to public servants should be subject to public scrutiny."

This is one piece of a larger set of changes our new government has committed to in order to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy, and make Manitoba families safer and stronger.



Your Manitoba PC Caucus

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GRAYDON INTRODUCES BILL TO RECOGNIZE RCMP IN MANITOBA

Cliff Graydon, MLA for Emerson, has introduced legislation that would establish February 1 as an annual day in Manitoba to commemorate and show appreciation for the RCMP, and for the work they do to protect and serve Manitobans and people across Canada.

“The Mountie and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are among Canada’s most recognizable symbols,” said Graydon. “The brave men and women of the RCMP serve Manitobans and all Canadians with distinction and give much in terms of service and sacrifice to our communities. This legislation would formally set an annual day on which to show respect, gratitude and appreciation for all they have done and continue to do.”

Bill 208, which was debated at second reading in the Legislature last week, highlights the importance of recognizing and promoting awareness of the historical and ongoing role of the RCMP in Manitoba. The bill proposes February 1 as the day for commemorating the RCMP because the national police service was formed on that date in 1920 through a merger of the Dominion Police and the Northwest Mounted Police. Manitoba’s provincial police service was absorbed into the RCMP in 1932.

The RCMP now has jurisdiction in eight provinces and three territories, and offers resources to other Canadian law enforcement agencies. Its 28,400 employees work in operations dealing with organized crime, terrorism, illicit drugs, economic crimes and offences that threaten the integrity of Canada's borders, while also helping youth, supporting Indigenous communities and assisting with United Nations peace operations worldwide.

EWASKO PROPOSES CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Wayne Ewasko, MLA for Lac du Bonnet, has proposed legislation that would recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month every year in Manitoba.

“About 60 children in Manitoba and more than 1,400 children across Canada are diagnosed with cancer every year, while there are an estimated 30,000 survivors of childhood cancer in this country,” said Ewasko, whose bill was debated for the first time this week. “Cancer has devastating effects, so it’s important to bring awareness to Manitobans and Canadians about the importance of the fight against all forms of this disease. We must try to educate the public about childhood cancer and provide support to families that struggle with it every day.”

Many organizations in Canada and around the world recognize September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. CancerCare Manitoba and the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation undertake activities to inform the public of this recognition.

Cancer kills more children from age six to young adulthood than any other disease, though enormous progress is being made to improve their long-term survival. The survival rate for children with cancer is now over 80 per cent, a dramatic increase from 30 years ago.

The CancerCare Manitoba Foundation provides substantive funding to CancerCare Manitoba for pediatric clinical trials and pediatric cancer research. CancerCare Manitoba is the national leader in pediatric trials, with the highest participation rate among patients. Manitoba’s new government has funded an additional \$4 million for the provision of cancer drugs for patients across the province, bringing the total amount to approximately \$50 million annually.

LAGASSE ASKS ABOUT THE REAL STATUS OF MANITOBA HYDRO



Bob Lagasse, MLA for Dawson Trail, spoke on behalf of concerned residents in his constituency and asked Crown Services Minister Ron Schuler (MLA for St. Paul) about the real state of Manitoba Hydro. Here is their exchange from Question Period last Thursday:

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): *Madam Speaker, the problems facing Manitoba Hydro after a decade of debt, decline and decay under the NDP are becoming increasingly well-known across the province.*

Unfortunately, NDP members, like the member for Fort Garry-Riverview, are still claiming that everything is completely fine

at Hydro, despite the mountains of evidence to the contrary.

The member for Fort Garry-Riverview says that Hydro is in a sound financial position and that the alarmists' talk damaged the brand of Hydro.

Can the Minister for Crown Services please tell the House the truth about Hydro?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): *I'd like to thank the member for Dawson Trail for that great question.*

Under the NDP decade of debt, Manitoba Hydro was severely affected by NDP political mismanagement, and Hydro's debt went from \$12 billion to \$25 billion. Manitoba's new government was elected to fix the finances, and we were elected to do that, and we will continue to do that, unlike the member for Fort-Garry Riverview and the NDP's decade of debt.

Truth doesn't damage a brand, Madam Speaker; the NDP bankrupting Manitoba Hydro did.

NEW NURSING STATION IN GRAND RAPIDS

A new nursing station officially opened in Grand Rapids today to ensure health-care services are available in the community, Health Minister Kelvin Goertzen (MLA for Steinbach) announced last week.

“People in this community need access to high-quality health-care services, from primary and chronic disease care to diagnostics,” said Goertzen. “This new facility will ensure residents in Grand Rapids, Misipawistik Cree Nation and the surrounding area receive this care close to home.”

The new, 7,000-sq.-ft. health facility replaces the nursing station built in 1983 and includes:

- three exam rooms;
- a two-stretcher trauma room; and
- offices for visiting professionals, such as physicians, mental health workers and regional diabetes program staff.

The province invested more than \$8.2 million in the project including costs for development, construction, equipment and furniture, among others. An additional \$1.2 million was provided for a traditional healing room in the attached federal building.

Swan River MLA Rick Wowchuk also welcomed the new nursing station in Grand Rapids as an important addition to the healthcare infrastructure in his constituency.

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NEW ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY FOR SENIORS OPENS IN DOMINION CITY

A new, unique assisted-living facility for seniors that offers the privacy of individual living units and the social benefits of communal meals and other group activities has officially opened its doors to tenants.

Abbeyfield House is a \$1.6-million bungalow-style, multi-family home with four studio and six one-bedroom units. Its shared living spaces include a kitchen, dining room, lounge and recreation area. The governments of Canada and Manitoba provided more than \$566,000 to this project through the federal-provincial Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) 2014-2019 extension agreement.

“Abbeyfield House is a wonderful housing option for seniors who want to retain their independence, but also enjoy the companionship and social benefits of a communal environment,” said Families Minister Scott Fielding (MLA for Kirkfield Park). “This grand opening is a special milestone for the community and for tenants and their families. The Manitoba government is proud to be a partner in this project, the first of its kind to follow the Abbeyfield housing model in our province.”

The property will be managed by Emerson-Franklin Heritage Holdings Inc. (EFHHI), which was created in 2014 by the Municipality of Emerson-Franklin to enhance housing, social and recreational services in the region. The Municipality of Emerson-Franklin donated the land for this project, valued at \$100,000.

For more information about housing programs and services in Manitoba, visit www.gov.mb.ca/housing.