

# Manitoba PC Caucus

Proud to serve  
Manitobans

## Week in Review

*September 23, 2016*

### **PREMIER'S STATEMENT ON FIXING OUR FINANCES, REPAIRING SERVICES, AND REBUILDING OUR ECONOMY**

This week, Manitobans learned about the costs of decisions by the previous government.

Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries' unnecessary purchase of, and plans to renovate, an office tower, the auditor general's condemnation of the lack of oversight and mentorship associated with the community benefits that were to have been created by the East Side Road Authority project, and the aggressive and imprudent pursuit of capital projects by Manitoba Hydro that have burdened the corporation with unprecedented debt and which threaten the financial health of our province.

Our government was elected to listen to Manitobans and to fight for changes that will result in a stronger, safer and more economically optimistic province for our children and for our children's children.

The challenge is large but together, we are up to the task.

In the coming weeks our government will be seeking the input of all Manitobans in an ambitious, innovative and all-party pre-budget listening exercise.

Our pre-budget consultations will welcome the input of all Manitobans and our government has extended invitations to members of all parties in the Manitoba legislature to be involved.

To get results, we must work together. We are listening to Manitobans. Together we will fix our province's finances, repair the services that Manitoba families rely upon and rebuild our economy.

There is nothing wrong with Manitoba that cannot be fixed by what is right with Manitobans.

*Premier Brian Pallister*



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## **FUNDING FOR DOWNTOWN BRANDON**

Funding for a grant program that encourages building owners and main floor tenants in downtown Brandon to make exterior and storefront improvements was announced this week by Indigenous and Municipal Relations Minister Eileen Clarke (MLA for Agassiz).

Brandon East MLA Len Isleifson welcomed this new investment in his community. “Downtown Brandon is a unique neighbourhood with its own culture, history and sense of community,” said Isleifson. “This program will help us enhance this important part of our city and attract more businesses, residents, investment and visitors to the area.”

More information on these grants can be found online: <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=&itm=39272>

## **PROVINCE HOLDING INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS**

Indigenous and Municipal Relations Minister Eileen Clarke will be holding regional roundtable meetings to consult with mayors, reeves and councils on new approaches to strategic infrastructure investments.

“Municipalities have told us provincial infrastructure funding needs to be more flexible to address local priorities, as well as easier to access with less red tape,” said Clarke. “We want to bring municipal leaders together to get their input and ideas, which will be critical to developing new approaches and better ways to invest in infrastructure.”

Meetings were held this week in Headingley and Brandon with further meetings scheduled in Dauphin (Sept 26), Steinbach (Sept 27), and Thompson (Sept 28).

## **NEW SENIORS HOUSING IN WINKLER**

Finance Minister Cameron Friesen (MLA for Morden-Winkler) was on hand as a new, 96-unit seniors housing project in Winkler officially opened its doors to residents on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

The eight-storey, \$26-million Buhler Active Living Centre (BALC) features an accessible design, with 48 affordable housing units, 24 market life-lease units and 24 supportive housing units. The affordable housing units include 18 one-bedroom and 30 two-bedroom suites. The main floor includes a seniors’ activity centre.

“The grand opening of this building is an important milestone for seniors and the entire community of Winkler,” said Friesen. “We know that seniors live healthier and more active lives when surrounded by family and friends in a familiar neighbourhood. Manitoba’s new government is a proud partner and we’d also like to recognize the dedication of the community members who have invested so much in making this property a reality.”



*Minister Friesen at the opening of the Buhler Active Living Centre in Winkler*

## **GUEST COLUMN: FIXING OUR FINANCES AND RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY**

By James Teitsma, MLA for Radisson



Our new Manitoba government is continuing to fix the province's finances following the previous administration's severe waste and mismanagement, another glaring example of which has been highlighted by the Office of the Auditor General.

In reports released this week, the auditor general describes the Manitoba East Side Road Authority (ESRA) as an organization that lacked accountability and oversight, which failed to monitor or measure the results of millions of expended tax dollars after it was created by the previous government.

The auditor general's office found ESRA had no measures in place for financial or construction management roles and no measurable objectives for its Aboriginal Engagement Strategy.

As well, the auditor general discovered ESRA did not keep track of allowances paid to community corporations and did not measure how these corporations benefited from them. ESRA also did not track whether people who were trained for the project later found employment with it.

The audit probe found, in addition, that most assessments of the project indicated equipment was inoperable or unsafe and that ESRA had no plan to address these failures.

Significant expenditures were involved. As discovered by the investigation, ESRA signed community benefit agreements totaling \$153 million - and many such deals were reached after the audit probe began. In less than two months earlier this year, ESRA pursued additional agreements worth nearly \$160 million.

The previous government was aware the auditor general was investigating, but did nothing to ensure ESRA was fulfilling its mandate.

Our new government will meet with the 13 First Nations involved in the East Side Road project and the Manitoba Metis Federation to review the audit reports and discuss how to proceed.

The auditor general's findings point to yet another instance of the mismanagement common under the previous government, which put its own political interests ahead of those of Manitobans.

Our government is moving the province toward a commitment to value for money in the public interest. We are taking steps to fix Manitoba's finances and are putting the province on a course that reflects Manitobans' priorities.

We will continue to pursue strategies that will make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada by the end of our first term.

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*St. Vital MLA Colleen Mayer celebrates the Newcomers' Harvest Feast at Rainbow Community Gardens*



*Indigenous and Municipal Relations Minister Eileen Clarke discusses funding for downtown revitalization with media*



*Hon. Cathy Cox, MLA for River East, discusses recycling with a group of constituents*



*A team of PC MLAs and staff participated in the 2016 Plane Pull for United Way of Winnipeg, pulling a water bomber borrowed from the Government of Manitoba*