

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

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MAJOR INVESTMENT IN MANITOBA'S PUBLIC SAFETY

August 3, 2018

The Manitoba government is awarding the tender for the replacement of the province's public safety communications service to Bell Mobility following a successful tendering process. The announcement was made this week at three simultaneous events in Thompson, Brandon, and West St. Paul.

"Ensuring the safety of Manitobans is our duty," said Pallister. "During an emergency, it's essential that we have reliable communications service across the province including in rural and remote areas. This new digital two-way mobile radio system will provide expanded coverage over a more secure network and improve the safety of our first responders."

Pallister noted the new equipment will replace the outdated FleetNet system used by public safety organizations such as fire, ambulance and police services, and the very high frequency (VHF) radio system operated by Manitoba Sustainable Development and used by conservation officers and forest firefighting crews. Public safety organizations will rely on this service to remain safe while protecting the lives of Manitobans, the premier added.

Bell Mobility will be responsible for end-to-end service delivery and the ownership and operation of towers, radios and antennae, as well as other needed infrastructure.

The new equipment will include radios with GPS, which can track the location of first responders to improve their safety. Advanced radio encryption will ensure police operations are secure and the equipment will be compatible with other systems outside of Manitoba to enable co-ordination during emergencies.

The premier noted five additional telecommunications towers will be added to expand coverage in northern Manitoba, and new mobile tower units will be available to provide additional coverage where needed on an emergency basis.

"Manitobans are smart shoppers who expect government to do the same," said Pallister. "To ensure best value for the taxpayer, we chose to go to tender and as a result, this competitive process resulted in a lower cost than we initially forecast."

Total project costs for the replacement of the public safety communications service is expected to be \$380 million, Pallister said, adding the new system will be implemented over the next three years.

PROVINCE INVEST \$5.4 MILLION IN GREEN TEAM PROJECTS

The Manitoba government has provided over \$5.4 million to support over 700 community organizations, municipalities and provincial parks that are delivering Green Team projects during the summer of 2018, Premier Brian Pallister and Sustainable Development Minister Rochelle Squires announced this week.

“We’re pleased to help young Manitobans get involved in the community to conserve and protect the many great areas of our province we enjoy and hold dear,” said Pallister. “These investments also support youth recreation and volunteer opportunities, as well as programs aimed specifically at Indigenous youth, visible minority youth and youth with a disability.”

Green Team provides grants to hire youth to work on community projects between May 1 and Aug. 31.

“More than 1,200 young Manitobans are employed in Green Team programs this summer,” said Squires. “These programs provide valuable work experience for young Manitobans through projects that improve both natural and built environments around the province.”

The program is split into multiple streams: urban (Winnipeg), hometown (all other municipalities), and conservation (provincial parks). Eligible recipients include non-profit organizations under both streams, and rural municipalities under the hometown stream. Priority is given to programs in designated Neighbourhoods Alive! communities and those in northern Manitoba.

Green Team funding through Manitoba Sustainable Development also supports provincial parks by creating roles for youth interested in working with wildlife, in forestry, or assisting at interpretive centres.

For more information on Green Team programs visit: www.gov.mb.ca/mr/bldgcomm/recreg/greenteam.html

GOVERNMENT TAKING ACTION TO ENSURE A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

The Manitoba government has released two reports looking at sexual harassment, harassment and respectful workplace policies and procedures in the civil service, Premier Brian Pallister announced alongside Sustainable Development Minister Rochelle Squires, minister responsible for the status of women, and Fred Meier, clerk of the executive council.

“There is no place for harassment of any kind in the civil service or any workplace,” said Pallister. “We are committed to ensuring all employees are treated with dignity and respect. These reports provide a framework that will help Manitoba become a national leader in policies and practices that prevent and address workplace harassment.”

The first report focuses on what was heard from employees about their experiences with sexual harassment throughout their careers in the Manitoba government. The second report outlines specific recommendations from an external consultant, MLT Aikins, to improve policies and procedures related to harassment including sexual harassment.

Manitoba government employees were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey and a series of in-person roundtable discussions led by the Status of Women Secretariat and the Civil Service Commission to gather employee perspectives on sexual harassment in the workplace. *The Manitoba Government Employee Consultations on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: What We Heard* report presents the findings from these consultations.

“The voices of those who came forward to share their lived experiences and insights on sexual harassment have been heard, and we are taking steps to make major changes to our workplace culture,” said Squires. “We will not shy away from this difficult topic. This report gives us a framework to improve our policies and make our workplaces safer.”

The premier said implementing the recommendations is a priority and work has already begun.