



## News Release

**For Immediate Release  
December 21, 2005**

### **SARM and SUMA announce joint committee to support economic development**

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) have established a steering committee to implement recommendations on improving the business climate in rural Saskatchewan.

The 11 recommendations come from a process called Clearing the Path, established by SARM in 2004 to identify and remove municipal impediments to economic development. SUMA has now joined SARM as a full partner to put the recommendations in place.

“The purpose of the Clearing the Path program is to support economic development in our communities. The municipal obstacles have been identified. Now we must assist our municipal leaders with finding the resources and support needed to build strong, sustainable communities,” SARM President Neal Hardy said. “The partnering of SUMA and SARM on this venture is so very important. We know we can only succeed with rural and urban municipalities working together.”

By joining forces municipalities can enhance their ability to attract new development, which strengthens their ability to retain youth, attract new residents, and further develops the services and infrastructure that rural citizens require, Hardy added.

“We are all facing the fact that rural communities across Saskatchewan are struggling with declining services and shrinking populations,” added SUMA President Don Schlosser. “If we want to turn this trend around we know that we must find ways to encourage and support economic development within our communities.”

The steering committee is made up of SARM and SUMA executives. It will set the direction for the subcommittees on transportation and development as they work toward implementing the recommendations of Clearing the Path.

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*Backgrounder Attached*

## **Background - Clearing the Path**

In December, 2003 SARM initiated a process to determine if the current municipal structure or regulations were impeding economic development in rural Saskatchewan, and if so, find ways to remove them.

At the 2004 SARM Annual Convention two members of council from each SARM division were selected by their respective divisions to sit on the committee. Along with those twelve people, the committee included three SARM Board members, two members representing the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association (RMAA), two members representing the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and two members representing the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN).

The CTP committee heard comments from over 20 industry groups. Based on input from these stakeholders, the committee identified the cost of doing business in rural Saskatchewan as the major municipal impediment. The high cost is due to the time and effort required to address the unpredictability of regulations, fees and permits that can exist from one municipality to another.

Two subcommittees were formed to look at more specific issues; Development and Transportation.

The Clearing the Path committee recognized that the main impediment identified could only be removed if municipalities, both urban and rural, work together to set common rules for development and streamline regulations where ever possible.

A total of 11 recommendations were presented to SARM delegates in the final report presented in March, 2005.

SUMA joined SARM as a full partner in the implementation phase of CTP in September, 2005. The meeting held on December 20, 2005 was the first for the joint steering committee.

The final CTP report is available on the SARM website at <http://www.sarm.ca/Policy/policy.htm>