



## From a Provincial Point of View

January 7, 2011

### Happy New Year!



2010 ended with more positive news for our province. We learned major economic forecasters are predicting Saskatchewan will have the fastest growing economy in Canada this year. Our economy is expected to increase by an average of 3.7 per cent in 2011, well ahead of the national average of 2.4 per cent. We also learned that Saskatchewan's population had hit a new record-high of 1,049,701. With more than 50,000 people moving to our province since 2007, this is the fastest and most sustained period of population growth here in decades.

The end of the year also saw confirmation our government did the right thing on behalf of Saskatchewan people by opposing BHP Billiton's hostile takeover bid for the Potash Corporation. Premier Brad Wall was named Newsmaker of the Year for the role he played in convincing the federal government the deal did not meet the 'net benefit' test for either Saskatchewan or Canada. Suggestions this would negatively affect the investment climate here have proven unfounded. BHP Billiton has announced it still plans to build a new potash mine in Jansen. Mining companies from Brazil and Germany are proceeding with plans to invest significantly in our province's economy. These decisions support the Premier's argument that you can say no for strategic reasons, but still have one of the best investment climates in the world.

Looking ahead to the spring session of the legislature, keeping our few remaining campaign promises will be a priority. We will increase municipal revenue sharing to the equivalent of one percentage point of the PST, providing cities, towns and RMs with a stable, long-term source of funding. Our government will also make further increases to education funding. This will translate into lower property taxes for many families.

The first promise our government kept following the 2007 election was the passing of fixed election date legislation. Under law, the next provincial election will be held on November 7<sup>th</sup> of this year. Between now and then, our government will continue to take action to ensure Saskatchewan remains the best place in Canada to live, work and raise a family.

### Casino Moose Jaw Employees Brighten Holidays for Local Families

Security employees at Casino Moose Jaw have organized a series of fundraisers and have raised more than \$1,100 for the local Salvation Army 'Adopt-a-Family' program. Sask Gaming, which operates Casino Moose Jaw and Casino Regina, will support employee efforts with a \$500 contribution through its Community Giving Program. With the funds raised, employees purchase food and small gifts for children, then assemble and deliver the hampers to the local Salvation Army in time for Christmas.

The holidays seem to bring out the best in people, and I'm pleased that Casino Moose Jaw employees are reaching out to spread some holiday cheer in their community. Congratulations to Casino Moose Jaw for helping to make the season brighter for families in their community.

Sask Gaming is proud to support community groups and non-profit organizations that are making life better for Saskatchewan people. In 2011, Sask Gaming will provide more than \$750,000 in community giving and sponsorships.

### **Saskatoon Sports Tourism Excited to Introduce Saskatchewan to Yukigassen!**



On January 28-29, 2011 Saskatoon will host North America's first organized snowball fighting tournament. Originating in Japan in 1988, Yukigassen (Japanese for "Snow Battle") has experienced a boom in popularity around the World and now it comes to Canada.

Featuring two opposing teams of seven (two members of the opposite sex per team), the goal of the game is to eliminate the competition by blasting them with snowballs (80,000 snowballs to be exact) or by capturing the flag on the other team's court. The event will take place at Delta Bessborough Gardens and will feature a festival-like atmosphere to coincide with the PotashCorp WinterShines

Festival. Event organizers at Saskatoon Sports Tourism are hoping for 47 teams of seven to nine players in one corporate/public division. Registration cost \$300 per team and can be done through Yukigassen Saskatoon website at [www.yukigassensaskatoon.com](http://www.yukigassensaskatoon.com) or for more information contact Saskatoon Sports Tourism at 931.7583.

### **Saskatchewan Workers see the Largest Earnings Increase in Canada**

A 7.7 per cent jump in average weekly earnings, the largest increase in Canada, has lifted Saskatchewan above the national average for the first time.

Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings were \$875.47, the third highest in the country after Alberta and Ontario, and ahead of the national average of \$863.33.

Saskatchewan's 7.7 average earnings increase for October far exceeds the province's Consumer Price Index of 2.1 per cent for the same month. As a result, workers have seen a "real increase" of 5.6 per cent as compared to a year ago.

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### **Saskatchewan Enters 2011 With the Second Lowest Unemployment Rate in Canada**

Record high employment for the month of December helped Saskatchewan close out the year with the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Saskatchewan's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of

5.5 per cent is well below the national average of 7.6, according to Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey.

December also marked Saskatchewan's 11th straight month of overall employment growth, the eighth straight month of employment growth for First Nations and Métis people and the fifth straight month of employment growth for First Nations and Métis youth.

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## **Saskatchewan Taxpayers Protected from Inflation**

Saskatchewan residents will see an additional \$9.4 million in annual tax savings as a result of the indexation of the provincial income tax system in 2011.

Indexation protects taxpayers from "bracket creep," or the automatic increase in tax caused by inflation and preserves the real value of personal income tax credits. For 2011, income tax brackets and personal tax credit amounts will increase by 1.4 per cent, which represents the annual average inflation rate from October 2009 through to September 2010.

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## **Government Provides \$7.3 Million to Cover Costs of School Division Linc Agreements**

The Government of Saskatchewan is providing \$7.3 million to 10 school divisions to fully fund the cost of Local Implementation and Negotiations Committee (LINC) agreements for the 2010-11 school division fiscal year.

"Our government is committed to funding the increase in costs associated with LINC agreements throughout the year," Education Minister Donna Harpauer said. "I am pleased to meet that obligation by providing an additional 7.3 million to the school divisions that were faced with cost increases. This is in addition to a \$33 million or 2.1 per cent increase in funding provided to school divisions in the 2010-11 Budget."

The 10 school divisions receiving one-time grant adjustment funding are Creighton, Lloydminster, Prairie Spirit, Regina Catholic, Greater Saskatoon Catholic, Regina Public, Saskatoon Public, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Prairie Valley and Saskatchewan Rivers.

This brings them in line with the seventeen other school divisions that ratified LINC agreements prior to Budget 2009-10, and had their costs fully recognized as part of the transitional funding provided to school divisions. Going forward, these costs are being considered in the context of the new education funding distribution model.

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## **First Nations Vets Get Federal Support**

Surviving First Nations Veterans will now be able to map the estimated 200 unmarked graves of their fellow soldiers, thanks to \$25,000 in federal funding. The \$25,000 from the federal government's Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) will be delivered sometime in January. Legislation requires the federal government to pay for the grave markers of all veterans, but many First Nations veterans – often denied farmland, money and other compensation bestowed on other veterans upon their return from wars and other service – were also denied money for a headstone. "It acknowledges the important contribution aboriginal veterans have made to this country," INAC spokesman Rod Desnomie said of the project.

## **Nominations for Civic By-Election in Ward 7 Accepted Between January 4-12**

Nominations for the civic by-election for Councillor for Ward 7 will be accepted at the City Clerk's Office, Second Floor, City Hall:

- During regular office hours (8:00 am to 5:00 pm) from January 4 until January 11; and,
- On January 12 between 8:00 am and 4 pm

Nomination forms are available at the City Clerk's Office, Second Floor, City Hall, 222 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, or at the Frances Morrison (main), J.S. Wood, and Cliff Wright Branches of the Saskatoon Public Library. All nominations must be accompanied by a deposit of \$100 in cash, certified cheque or money order.

The civic by-election for Ward 7 will be on Wednesday, February 9. For more information please visit [www.saskatoon.ca](http://www.saskatoon.ca) and look under "E" for Elections, or call 975-3240.

## **Thought of the Day**

*It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters, in the end.* - Ursula K. Le Guin

## **Just The Headlines – [www.gov.sk.ca/news](http://www.gov.sk.ca/news)**

Jan. 6, 2011 - [SASKJOBS.CA REACHES RECORD POPULARITY IN 2010](#)

Jan. 5, 2011 - [ISC RECOGNIZED FOR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE](#)

Jan. 5, 2011 - [IMPROVING CYPRESS HILLS INTERPROVINCIAL PARK](#)

Dec. 30, 2010 - [SASKATCHEWAN'S ECONOMY TO LEAD THE NATION IN 2011](#)

Dec. 29, 2010 - [SASKATCHEWAN TAXPAYERS PROTECTED FROM INFLATION](#)

## **Did You Know???**

- There are 5,600 more people working in Saskatchewan than a year ago and we have the second-lowest unemployment rate in Canada
- Saskatchewan is now the fastest growing province in Canada. Our population grew by 16,500 in the past year to an all-time high of over 1,045,000.
- The Conference Board of Canada and many other independent forecasters are saying that Saskatchewan will lead the country in economic growth in 2011.

## **Keep In Touch**

I appreciate the many opportunities to make a positive difference in my constituency. Your phone calls, letters and emails make a big difference in keeping me informed on the issues that matter to you. If you would like to recognize anyone or have your event mentioned in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to call me.



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***“From a Provincial Point of View”*** is a weekly message from Ken Cheveldayoff, MLA Saskatoon Silver Springs. Your opinions are important and your letters, emails and phone calls on any issues relating to the provincial government are welcomed. Contact Ken by calling (306) 651-7100, emailing [ken.cheveldayoff.mla@sasktel.net](mailto:ken.cheveldayoff.mla@sasktel.net) or writing Ken Cheveldayoff, MLA Saskatoon Silver Springs, 1106A Central Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7N 2H1. **To subscribe or be removed from this newsletter, please send an email message.** This newsletter is produced with the assistance of the Saskatchewan Party Caucus Office.