



# From a Provincial Point of View

December 16, 2011

## MESSAGE FROM PREMIER WALL

With the short but important fall session of the legislature behind us, our thoughts now turn to what is truly important: time with friends and family over the holidays. It reminds all of us of why we chose a life of public service. While MLAs come from all walks of life, we have one thing in common: the desire to serve the people of Saskatchewan as best we can.

Over the last two weeks, our government laid out the steps we will take over the next four years to continue to move Saskatchewan forward. In the speech from the Throne, we re-affirmed our commitments to responsibly manage the province's historic growth, improve the quality of life for all Saskatchewan people, make life more affordable and to be accountable to you: the electorate.

Over the course of the legislative session, our government kept several promises we made during the recent election campaign through the introduction of several pieces of important legislation.

We followed through on our promise to provide more support for people with diabetes, by moving two long-acting insulins from Exception Drug Status onto the provincial drug formulary and to expand the Children's Insulin Pump Program to cover residents up to the age of 25. We did what we said we would do.

With the large increase in economic activity in Saskatchewan in recent years, we introduced a motion regarding the creation of a lobbyist registry. With historic growth come new challenges, including paid government lobbyists playing a greater role in our province.

We also promised during the campaign to continue to improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan people with disabilities through further enhancements to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program. Starting in January, more than 3,000 SAID recipients who live in residential care settings will receive a \$50 per month increase to their benefits. Over the next four years benefits for those living independently will increase by \$350 per month.

Legislation was introduced to make getting a university degree more accessible. Currently, only the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina can issue degrees. Under this new legislation, degree-granting status could be expanded to other post-secondary institutions in the province. With more and more of Saskatchewan's young people choosing to start careers and raise families here, it's important they be provided with every available educational opportunity.

We kept our word on an important promise we made that will help first-time home buyers and families. Effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, the First-Time Homebuyers Tax Credit comes into effect. It will provide a \$1,100 non-refundable tax credit by applying a provincial tax credit of 11 per cent to the first \$10,000 of an

eligible home purchase. Also becoming effective in the New Year is an expansion of the Active Families Benefit. It has been expanded to include all children under the age of 18. The Active Families Benefit provides an income tax benefit of up to \$150 per child to help with the costs of cultural, recreational and sports activities.

And, finally, we introduced legislation that keeps the Premier's commitment for the 2012-13 school year to begin after the Labour Day long weekend. Amendments to *The Education Act, 1995*, mean the earliest students will begin the school year is the first day following Labour Day and the school year will end by June 30.

Over the coming weeks, the world slows down providing us with an opportunity to reflect and give thanks. While I am always thankful for the love and support of friends and family, I would be remiss if I did not also thank you for your support. On November 7, 2011, you made history by giving the Saskatchewan Party a strong mandate to lead our province into the future. Over the next four years, I will do everything in my power to honour that trust, each and every day.

### **PREMIER SAYS SHORT BUT PRODUCTIVE FALL SITTING WILL KEEP SASKATCHEWAN MOVING FORWARD**

Premier Brad Wall today said the eight-day fall sitting of the new Legislative Assembly was brief but very productive.

"Our government laid out our vision for a growing, vibrant province in the Throne Speech and we introduced 36 pieces of legislation," Wall said. "Most importantly, we have already kept a number of the promises we made in the recent election campaign, and most of the others will be completed in next year's budget. We made some very clear commitments during the election and we have already kept many of those commitments.

During the short session, the government kept its promises to:

- improve assistance for persons with disabilities by increasing benefits and expanding the number of people covered by the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program;
- improve services for persons with diabetes;
- introduce the First Time Homebuyers Tax Credit, effective January 1, 2012;
- expand the Active Families Benefit to cover all children under 18, effective January 1, 2012;
- introduce legislation to standardize the start of the school year on the Tuesday following Labour Day each year; and
- introduce legislation to extend the notice period for rent increases from six months to one year for property owners who choose not to participate in the tenant assistance initiative created by the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Industry Association.
- The legislative session will resume in the spring with further debate on the new legislation and the presentation of the 2012-13 provincial budget.

"Saskatchewan is on the right track," Wall said. "In the past few days, we have seen many independent forecasters say that Saskatchewan's economy was strong in 2011 and will be again in 2012.

"Our government will work hard to keep the Saskatchewan advantage and keep Saskatchewan moving forward."

### **SASKATCHEWAN GAMING CORPORATION AND CASINO MOOSE JAW PRESENTED FOOD BANK WITH DONATION OF \$10,000**



It was great to attend a very exciting night on Wednesday for the Moose Jaw & District Food Bank. I was joined by colleagues Warren Michelson and Greg Lawrence, along with George Reed and Twyla Meredith.

As part of my Ministerial Duties, I had the honour of presenting the Food Bank with a donation for \$10,000 by the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation and Casino Moose Jaw.

SaskGaming Corporation ensures that community events and cultural events are well supported, but one of the most important things is supporting the food

bank, ensuring that residents of Moose Jaw and southern Saskatchewan don't go hungry at Christmas time or throughout the year. SaskGaming recognizes the importance of investing in community organizations that help make our province a great place to be.

This just adds to the great last couple months for the Food Bank as their shelves are stocked for the holidays from the many donations picked up during the CP Rail Holiday Train and the Better Together Food Drive at Halloween. But they're always accepting donations to help out those less fortunate in Moose Jaw.

I encourage everyone to help with their local food bank, especially at this time of the year.

## **KRAWETZ TAKES SASKATCHEWAN'S STORY TO NEW YORK**

Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Ken Krawetz has taken the story of Saskatchewan's strong economy and promising growth prospects to New York City, where he was given a warm reception by a senior group of U.S. and international investors.

The investor forum, organized by a group called Euromoney Conferences, brought together more than 300 senior level officers from the federal and provincial governments, financial institutions and leading corporations with institutional investors from Canada and abroad.

The annual conference provides a meeting place for the key players in Canada's capital markets to examine the Canadian economy and financial markets in a global context, providing insight into investment opportunities and the financing needs of Canadian issuers.

As a keynote speaker at the conference on Dec. 7, Krawetz had a valuable opportunity to review Saskatchewan's recent progress.

"In a time of global economic uncertainty and huge market volatility, Saskatchewan retains a strong and stable fiscal environment," Krawetz said. "We were the only Canadian province to receive a credit rating upgrade last year. We now have a Triple A rating from Standard and Poor's, the highest rating the province has ever had. At the same time, private sector forecasters expect our economic growth to be as high as 5.1 per cent this year."

Krawetz also had the opportunity to meet with representatives of various central banks from around the world, as well as with John Prato, Canada's consul-general in New York.

While Canada and Saskatchewan are not immune to the uncertainty affecting the global economy, Krawetz said he was gratified to hear that we have a strong reputation for prudent fiscal management, with a positive outlook for future growth.

"Our taxes have come down, our government general debt continues to decline, and we are setting the stage for future growth with key infrastructure investments," Krawetz said. "I'm confident Saskatchewan is going to become an even better place to invest in the future."

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PROVINCIAL CHAMPS!**



The Arns Falcons (Bantam) of the Saskatoon Kinsmen Football League won the Provincial Championship in Moose Jaw by defeating the Moose Jaw Jets. The boys played really well on an extremely cold winter day. The weather didn't impact their enthusiasm as they came home as Provincial Champions.

My son Carter had the privilege of playing on this team with a group of great young men who were mentored by fantastic coaches.

Congratulations to the team and coaching staff on this great accomplishment. Congratulations

as well to the Pee Wee Falcons who were also Provincial Champions.

## **RBC FORECASTS SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMY TO LEAD THE NATION 2012 AND 2013**

Another major economic forecaster is predicting that Saskatchewan is poised for growth. According to recent report from RBC, Saskatchewan GDP is expected to grow in the province by 4.5 per cent in 2011, 4.2 per cent in 2012 and 4.7 per cent in 2013.

"It seems when things are going well, they are really going well for Saskatchewan," said Paul Ferley, assistant chief economist with RBC.

Enterprise Minister Jeremy Harrison noted that this recent report reflects the numerous opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

"The strength of our resource base, new residents moving into the province and solid growth in manufacturing and trade are creating a tremendous increase in economic activity," said Harrison.

[Read more . . . RBC predicts Saskatchewan will lead - Government of Saskatchewan](#)  
[Read more . . . Province poised for more growth - The Star Phoenix](#)

## **EI RECIPIENT NUMBERS CONTINUE TO FALL IN SASKATCHEWAN**

For the 19th consecutive month, the number of Saskatchewan people receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits dropped.

There was a year-over-year decrease of 3,360 (-26.0 per cent) regular Employment Insurance recipients in October of compared to October 2010 (seasonally adjusted). This decrease is greater than the national decline of 20.3 per cent.

"Saskatchewan's strong labour market and today's news of decreased Employment Insurance recipients in the province show that the people of Saskatchewan are able to find new employment opportunities, many of them full-time," Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration Minister Rob Norris said.

[Read more . . .](#)

## **TAX SAVINGS FOR FAMILIES AND FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS TO TAKE EFFECT JANUARY 1, 2012**

The provincial government today confirmed that new and expanded tax credits for first-time homeowners and for families worth up to \$11.6 million will take effect January 1, 2012.

"Both the First-Time Homebuyers' Tax Credit and the expansion to the Active Families Benefit will help to make life more affordable for Saskatchewan residents," Finance Minister Ken Krawetz said. "We said we would expand the PST exemption on children's clothing, and we did it within days of being re-elected. We said we would help young people get into their own homes and lower the cost of raising a family and we are moving on that now."

The First-Time Home Buyers Tax Credit will provide a provincial non-refundable income tax credit of up to \$1,100 to eligible taxpayers, determined by applying a provincial tax credit rate of 11 per cent to the first \$10,000 of an eligible home purchase.

[Read more . . .](#)

## **NEW HEALTH BUS**



Once again, the hard work of Saskatchewan people and tremendous team effort has resulted in a new health bus in our city.

The new health bus was purchased with \$360,000 collected by the fantastic effort of the Synergy 8 Community Builders along with the support of Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan Inc., which matched the \$180,000 raised. The funds include a \$100,000 contribution from the Ministry of Health and the Saskatoon Health Region. Many of you will remember when I highlighted the money raised last fall when golf celebrity Nick Faldo visited Saskatoon.

The new health bus is the largest mobile clinic in North America and is staffed by an MD Ambulance paramedic and a nurse practitioner. The bus will travel through core neighbourhoods providing primary healthcare and basic treatment to residents who are unlike to seek treatment elsewhere.

The bus was scheduled to enter service this week. Troy Davies, director of public affairs for MD Ambulance and a member of Synergy 8 is extremely excited about bringing health-care to the patient, not bringing the patient to healthcare.

Thank you to everyone involved in making this dream become reality within only five months. What an outstanding accomplishment and a true reflection of Saskatchewan spirit!

## **CHANGES TO EDUCATION ACT MEET PREMIER'S COMMITMENT**

Education Minister Donna Harpauer introduced legislation in the house today that amends The Education Act, 1995 to meet the Premier's commitment for the 2012-13 school year to begin after the Labour Day long weekend.

"This change will mean that students and their families can fully enjoy the last long weekend of summer, as they do in other provinces including British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario," Harpauer said.

With the changes to legislation, the earliest students will begin the school year is the first day following Labour Day and the latest day in the year students will be in school is June 30.

Boards of education will continue to set specific timelines for the opening and closing date of schools, school hours of operation and the general schedule of operation for the school year. Boards will also retain the autonomy to allow teachers to begin working earlier to prepare for the school year.

[Read more . . .](#)

## **DID YOU KNOW ??**

- Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings (including overtime) increased by 6.9 per cent in September 2011, compared to September 2010. The national average increased by 1.1 per cent. Saskatchewan's average weekly earnings of \$906.22 in September 2011 were second-highest in Canada.
- The value of building permits issued in Saskatchewan increased in September 2011 by 37.0 per cent, compared to September 2010. Saskatchewan ranked first among the provinces in terms of percentage change. Nationally, permits were down 14.4 per cent in this period. In the first nine months of 2011, the value of building permits in the province was up by 27.9 per cent, the highest growth rate among the provinces, compared to the same period in 2010.
- Residential building permits in Saskatchewan were up by 1.9 per cent between September 2010 and September 2011, while non-residential permits were up by 92.0 per cent.

## **THOUGHT OF THE DAY**

"How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these."

George Washington Carver

## **JUST THE HEADLINES – [www.gov.sk.ca/news](http://www.gov.sk.ca/news)**

Dec. 16, 2011 - WESTERN PROVINCES APPLAUD THE PROCLAMATION OF BILL C-18

Dec. 15, 2011 - THREE MORE CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE ADDED IN TIME FOR NEXT PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Dec. 15, 2011 - GOVERNMENT CHANGES ELECTION LAW TO AVOID POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH FEDERAL ELECTION

Dec. 14, 2011 - NEW CHANGES WILL BENEFIT SASKATCHEWAN TENANTS  
Dec. 14, 2011 - PREMIER WELCOMES ROYAL VISIT  
Dec. 14, 2011 - SASKATCHEWAN NEW VEHICLE SALES AND MANUFACTURING LEAD THE NATION  
Dec. 14, 2011 - HIGHWAY HOTLINE NOW ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK  
Dec. 14, 2011 - INNOVATIVE HOUSING ON THE HORIZON  
Dec. 13, 2011 - NEW LEGISLATION WILL BENEFIT AT RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH, IMPROVE OMBUDSMAN SERVICES  
Dec. 13, 2011 - SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL PARKS SET A NEW VISITATION RECORD

## **SOME UPCOMING EVENTS**

(If you would like your event listed in Provincial Point of View, please contact [ken.cheveldayoff.mla@sasktel.net](mailto:ken.cheveldayoff.mla@sasktel.net))

**Please check my website at [www.cheveldayoff.org](http://www.cheveldayoff.org) for additional information.**

### **Saskatchewan Youth Parliament**

When: December 26 – 31

Where: Regina

Details: The Christmas Session is the highlight of the SYP calendar year. Please visit their website at <http://www.saskyouthparliament.com>

### **BHP Billiton Enchanted Forest Holiday Light Tour**

When: November 18, 2011-January 8, 2012

Where: Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park, 1903 Forestry Farm Park Drive

Time: 5:30 pm-11:00 pm nightly

Details: A spectacular forest drive-through Christmas light show featuring illuminated evergreens and computer animated character light displays on a 2.5km route. \$6.00 per person, \$25.00 per car, 3 and under free.

## **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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