

PRIMARY WEIGHT CORRIDORS LAUNCHED

A significant step has been taken in boosting the economic potential for rural and urban communities through the Clearing the Path (CTP) Primary Weight Corridor network which was announced today by the CTP Transportation Committee, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the provincial government.

The CTP corridors are municipal roads that will increase primary weight access throughout the province, creating a more efficient, integrated transportation network.

"We applaud the work of our partners, SUMA and SARM to create this network, which will link nearly 4,500 kilometres of municipal road to municipalities and communities," Government Relations Minister Harry Van Mulligen said. "Municipalities have identified that primary weight restrictions can be an obstacle to economic growth. Today's announcement removes that obstacle and positions communities to take advantage of their economic potential, which will bring lasting benefits to residents throughout Saskatchewan."

"SUMA, SARM and the CTP Transportation committee are to be commended for their leadership in bringing this initiative, which complements the government's Transportation for Economic Advantage, to fruition," Highways and Transportation Minister Buckley Belanger said. "This is the first time in the province's history that we will have true integration of the provincial road system. It will result in reduced transportation-related costs for businesses and agricultural producers, ease the financial burden on municipalities responsible for maintaining municipal roads, and enhance road safety for all drivers."

"Through extensive consultation, we heard that one of the biggest barriers to economic development in some areas is the lack of primary weight roads," CTP Transportation Chair Richard Porter said. "With maintenance funding from the provincial government, this program will help Saskatchewan communities better attract development opportunities and grow their own industries."

"These corridors are the culmination of three years of work by the CTP committee," SARM President David Marit said. "Through co-operation and partnership on all levels, this program will give our members one more tool to help expand our economy and grow our rural communities."

"SUMA and SARM have worked tirelessly for the past several years through the Clearing the Path partnership and I'm very happy to see that our ideas are showing tangible success," SUMA President Allan Earle said. "These primary weight corridors should have a tremendous economic benefit to all urban and rural municipalities in the area."

The Clearing the Path program was initiated in 2004 by SARM and SUMA to address economic impediments in rural communities. Government Relations provides funding to municipalities for signing and maintenance of the corridors. The 2007-08 Provincial Budget included \$5 million for the program. Funding will increase to \$10 million in the 2008-09 Budget, and also assist in the upgrading of corridor roads.

The corridors were identified through extensive consultation by the CTP transportation committee with municipal leaders and with support from the provincial government, with funding for the meetings from Transport Canada.

Distinctive Clearing the Path signage (see attachments) is being installed to allow drivers to identify CTP corridors.

More details about Clearing the Path and Primary Weight Corridors are available at www.clearingthepath.ca

For more information, contact:

Richard Porter
Clearing the Path Committee
Shellbrook, SK.
Phone: 306-747-7694

David Marit
SARM
Fife Lake
Phone: 306-476-7754