



*Highlights of recent news and public events from Saskatoon Southeast MLA Don Morgan*

## **SPRING LEGISLATIVE SESSION FOCUSED ON SUPPORTING GROWTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Premier Scott Moe said the government has delivered critical support to build the Saskatchewan economy and sustain high-quality services as the province continues to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“During the spring session, we introduced a budget that will ensure our province continues on the path of growth while we manage an unprecedented health care challenge,” Moe said. “The budget includes a two-year \$7.5 billion capital plan that will create thousands of jobs while preparing Saskatchewan for the recovery to come. Saskatchewan is well positioned for an economic comeback. We have a strong financial foundation. We have determined and talented people. And we produce what a growing world requires – food, fuel and fertilizer. I believe Saskatchewan will get through the current challenges and emerge even stronger.”

The Provincial Budget, released on June 15, includes a record \$5.8 billion investment in health care, including more than \$100 million in additional funding to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

Among other initiatives in the budget:

- A record \$435 million for mental health and addictions supports and services
- \$20 million investment to reduce surgical wait times

- \$80 million to build new long-term care facilities in Grenfell and La Ronge and to support renewal projects in 51 long-term care facilities across the province
- Record funding for Saskatchewan schools, including \$2.6 billion to support Prekindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms, early learning and child care, libraries and literacy
- \$278 million in no-strings-attached Municipal Revenue Sharing – an 11 per cent increase and the highest amount ever provided under the program
- \$150 million for the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program for municipal infrastructure projects
- \$715 million to improve highway safety and efficiency, including more than 20 new passing lanes to be constructed in 2020

During the session, Premier Moe said the government will continue to support the goals outlined in the province's new Growth Plan, released last fall.

The government will proceed with the establishment of three new trade and investment offices in Japan, India and Singapore.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has not changed the basic fundamentals of the Saskatchewan economy," Moe said. "Once the crisis passes, the world will continue to grow, and demand for Saskatchewan products will be strong. We need to be in a position to capitalize on that demand. The new trade offices will help us diversify our markets and help Saskatchewan exporters make connections with international buyers, which will mean more jobs here at home."

During the session, the government also announced the creation of a Nuclear Secretariat to coordinate nuclear policy and programs and plan for the deployment of clean energy small modular reactors in Saskatchewan.

The government introduced amendments to legislation to better protect the rights of legal firearm and handgun owners in the province.

And during the session, the Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol (Clare's Law) Act came into force in Saskatchewan. "Clare's Law" authorizes a police protocol to disclose risk information related to someone's violent or abusive past to intimate partners whose

safety may be threatened. Saskatchewan is the first jurisdiction in Canada to enact Clare's Law legislation and is encouraging other provinces to follow in its footsteps.



*POSITIVELY PROVINCIAL . . .*

## **PREMIER MOE PAYS TRIBUTE TO RETIRING MLAS**

As the spring session of the legislature concluded, Premier Scott Moe acknowledged and thanked MLAs who will not be running in the next provincial election.

"Politics is a partisan calling, but on both sides of the assembly there are people of good will who are motivated by essentially the same thing," Moe said. "We all love this province. We all want to build a strong, resilient, inclusive Saskatchewan. On behalf of the entire province, I want to thank my departing colleagues for their sacrifice and commitment as we worked together to build a better Saskatchewan."

Eleven MLAs – seven from the governing Saskatchewan Party and four from the Opposition New Democratic Party – have announced they are stepping down.

Leaving on the government side are:

Dan D'Autremont (Cannington)

Nancy Heppner (Martensville-Warman)

Greg Brkich (Arm River)

Glen Hart (Last Mountain-Touchwood)

Herb Cox (The Battlefords)

Larry Doke (Cutknife-Turtleford)

Warren Michelson (Moose Jaw North)

The New Democrats stepping down are:  
Warren McCall (Regina Elphinstone-Centre)  
David Forbes (Saskatoon Centre)  
Danielle Chartier (Saskatoon Riversdale)  
Cathy Sproule (Saskatoon Nutana)

The legislative assembly convened for the final time on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, before the upcoming provincial election, scheduled for October 26<sup>th</sup>.

Farewell speeches highlighted the day, along with tributes from Premier Moe and Opposition Leader Ryan Meili.

All of the retiring MLAs have served at least two terms in the legislature. D'autremont, the former Speaker, is the longest-serving MLA in the assembly. He was first elected in 1991.

"These folks are exemplary citizens who have never forgotten why they were elected," Moe said. "It was a great honour to serve with them. I know MLAs on both sides of the house join me in wishing our colleagues the very best as they begin the next chapter in their life."

## **MORE HEALTH SERVICES RESUME, UNIVERSAL TESTING BEGINS THIS WEEK**

Health services in Saskatchewan continue to expand, with additional everyday programs and services further increasing beginning July 13. This is outlined as Phase 3 of the Saskatchewan Health Authority's service resumption plan which was initially announced in May.

Services that will resume in this next phase include: - Further enhanced mental health and addictions support, including the opening of social detox and addictions inpatient

treatment; - Additional Chronic Diseases Management/Wellness Programs/Stroke Prevention; and - Specialized services for clients with developmental disabilities, Autism and brain injuries.

Since service resumption began on May 19, 544 health services have re-started in all areas of the province. Regina and southern areas have seen more services resume compared with Saskatoon and the north, given the COVID-19 cases in those areas and the response personnel required to support it.

“Overall, we’ve been pleased with our ability to bring services back online, while still implementing strategies to keep patients and providers safe,” SHA Chief Executive Officer Scott Livingstone said. “Patients and their families have been very understanding of the additional screening measures and changes to how they had traditionally received service. Both staff and physicians are happy to be seeing their patients again, as well.”

Surgical volumes have been increased at each phase of service resumption, including the most recent phase which included more urgent, emergent and also some elective procedures. This next phase will further increase surgical volumes to between 75 and 85 per cent of pre-COVID levels. These numbers vary significantly by site and as a result of staff availability. Moose Jaw’s Dr. F.H Wigmore Hospital, for example, is achieving beyond 100 per cent of their pre-COVID surgical levels as a result of new surgeons that were recruited to the community. Together, the SHA and Ministry of Health are working in partnership with physicians and other operational leaders to continue focus on the backlog of surgeries.

Medical Imaging capacity has also increased to 90 per cent of pre-COVID service levels overall, with MRIs at 91 per cent and CT at 93 per cent, for example. Virtual care appointments continue to be offered where possible, with some face-to-face services being offered, where needed. Since initiating expanded virtual care options as a result of the pandemic in March, more than 175,000 appointments have been delivered through this option.

“As we expand services, we are still also continuing to keep focused on COVID-19 support as well,” Livingstone said. “We’ve entered our ‘new normal,’ meaning while

there is still some room to increase some services, we cannot let our guard down on the pandemic, especially as we progress towards the Fall.”

All services are listed on the Saskatchewan Health Authority website, with new services being added each day at [www.saskhealthauthority.ca/service-alerts](http://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/service-alerts). Beginning July 14, COVID-19 testing will be available universally to anyone who requests it, regardless of whether they have symptoms or not. A referral for testing can be made by contacting HealthLine 811.

SHA laboratories are currently processing approximately 600 tests per day, with capacity to perform upwards of 1,800 tests per day. Patients will be prioritized for testing based on a number of factors. The time between a testing request and receiving the test itself may vary based upon patient need.

Residents are encouraged to learn more about the testing process by watching this video on Saskatchewan Health Authority’s YouTube channel (note: processes may vary slightly depending on testing location) at <https://youtu.be/-oPEEbE4mQU>.

## **EVICTION SUSPENSIONS TO BE LIFTED**

Starting August 4, 2020, the Office of Residential Tenancies (ORT) will begin accepting eviction applications from landlords for non-payment of rent.

“When the pandemic began, we wanted to ensure tenants facing hardship as a result of COVID-19 were able to take the necessary social-distancing measures,” Justice Minister and Attorney General Don Morgan said. “With the success of flattening the curve in Saskatchewan, we believe it’s appropriate to lift the moratorium on non-urgent evictions.”

Applicants will need to submit their application by email or mail to the ORT. No in-person service will be offered at this time. The ORT continues to encourage landlords

and tenants to communicate with each other about their individual situations so that they can come to mutually agreeable solutions in this challenging time.

For additional information and forms to file an application, please visit [www.saskatchewan.ca/ort](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/ort). The ORT can also be reached at [ort@gov.sk.ca](mailto:ort@gov.sk.ca) or 1-888-215-2222.

## **30,300 MORE JOBS AS SASKATCHEWAN RE-OPENS**

Saskatchewan had one of the strongest rates of job growth in Canada in June as more of the economy reopened and the province continued its strong recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

According to job numbers released by Statistics Canada today, Saskatchewan saw an increase of 30,300 jobs (seasonally adjusted), or 6.0 per cent, in June compared to May.

Saskatchewan ranked fourth highest in month-to-month job growth slightly ahead of the national average growth rate of 5.8 per cent. Employment in Saskatchewan is now at 92.6 per cent of its pre-COVID February level, ranking third highest employment recovery of all provinces, ahead of the national average of 90.8 per cent.

“The increase in jobs over the previous month shows significant recovery and indicates that the effects of COVID-19 on the province’s labour market are beginning to moderate,” Immigration and Career Training Minister Jeremy Harrison said. “As Saskatchewan is working toward a strong economic recovery, we are pleased to see these positive indicators that show our province is taking the right course of action with the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan.”

Saskatchewan’s unemployment rate in June was 11.6 per cent (seasonally adjusted), down from 12.5 per cent in May 2020, and below the national average of 12.3 per cent.

Other positive signs of a strong economic recovery include the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) business barometer index for small business confidence showing Saskatchewan with the second highest ranking among provinces at 59.1 points, above the national average of 54.6 points.

Also, in the first half of 2020, Saskatchewan's urban housing starts had the highest year-over-year growth in Western Canada, second highest among all provinces, with an increase of 23.2 per cent, compared to the same period in 2019. Nationally, urban housing starts declined by 6.5 per cent over the same period.

## **\$5.88 MILLION FOR SASKATOON POLICING INITIATIVES**

The Ministry of Corrections and Policing is providing \$4.98 million through the Municipal Police Grants program for 43 existing Saskatoon Police Service positions in 2020-2021. This is an increase of \$70,000 from last year.

"Public safety is a priority for our government," Saskatoon University MLA Eric Olauson said on behalf of Corrections and Policing Minister Christine Tell. "We are proud to support the Saskatoon Police Service and the work it does to ensure community safety."

The funding for Saskatoon supports the renewal of the Police and Crisis Team (PACT), which comprises police officers and mental health workers who provide an integrated and coordinated response to persons experiencing a mental health crisis in the community. Funding also supports the Integrated Crime Reduction Team which gathers intelligence on street gangs and gang associates, and the Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) program, which is dedicated to the investigation of child exploitation offenses.

Saskatchewan Government Insurance is also providing \$900,000 for five positions as part of the Combined Traffic Services Saskatchewan initiative. This brings the total amount of the Saskatoon Police Service Funding Agreement to \$5.88 million for 48 police positions in 2020-2021.

“This support from the province helps the Saskatoon Police Service work towards community safety in Saskatoon,” Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark said. “Community well-being is complex work, and we increasingly need to be reaching out and building partnerships between governments and agencies to find success in this area.”

“Efforts of both prevention and enforcement around gang-activity, exploitation and violence are critical to public safety in Saskatoon,” Saskatoon Police Chief Troy Cooper said. “The continued support provided by the Province of Saskatchewan assists our officers as they address these issues.”

The Ministry of Corrections and Policing provides funds to police services across Saskatchewan through the Municipal Police Grants program to support 129 municipal police positions and targeted policing initiatives..

## **THERE IS SO MUCH TO DO AT BLACKSTRAP PROVINCIAL PARK THIS SUMMER!**

Blackstrap Provincial Park is the must-visit provincial park in 2020.

“Located only half an hour from Saskatoon, Blackstrap Provincial Park is a great place to visit for a day-trip or for overnight camping,” Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Gene Makowsky said. “This park offers experiences for families, adventure seekers and new park users.”

New to the park this year is the Aquatic Adventures Inflatable Waterpark. The park offers 13 on-water challenges for adventure seekers to jump through slides, climb bridges and swing or flip into Blackstrap Lake. The waterpark will be open seven days per week from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. pending good weather. Interested visitors can check out <https://www.saskaquaticadventures.com/our-parks/black-strap> for more information.

Returning to the park this year is JT's Beach Café. Just steps from the beach, this food and beverage vendor makes a quick trip or a weekend visit to Blackstrap Provincial Park worthwhile. Visitors can also enjoy the mobile JT's Ice Cream Van that serves up cold treats throughout the park all summer long.

Park users looking for a safe, but fun activity while in the park can check out the self-use night geo-caching course. Visitors should bring their own flashlights to use, and follow the directions posted in the park. Night caching is best done after dusk, when the sun goes down.

Another attraction of interest this season at Blackstrap Provincial Park will be the two drive-in movie nights that will be hosted in the park on Saturday, August 22 and Friday, September 11. This season, visitors are reminded that at least one campground will be open in each Saskatchewan Provincial Park that offers camping until the end of September, with lots of availability all summer and into the fall.

In Blackstrap Provincial Park, campers can book into the Kevin Misfeldt campground through to the end of September. With historically beautiful fall weather in Saskatchewan, a fall camping trip is a great way to hang on to those summer vibes. Note – a valid entry permit is required year-round so visitors are reminded to keep their annual entry permits for their fall camping and for upcoming winter events.

Saskatchewan Parks Week kicks off on Sunday, July 12 this year with Canada's Parks Day being observed on Saturday, July 18. To celebrate, Sask Parks Ambassador, Annika Mang and her family will be in Blackstrap Provincial Park experiencing all the park has to offer and sharing via Sask Parks social media channels (@SaskParks on Facebook and Instagram). Annika is a content creator, storyteller, writer and photographer specializing in family travel adventure. Annika believes that experiences like camping, hiking, or enjoying a beach day with the family are some of the best ways to connect.

Sask Parks staff will be implementing enhanced cleaning and sanitization procedures and minimizing in-park contact with visitors where possible. Park visitors are asked to bring their own hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, maintain physical distance from others, respect the restrictions and rules that are in place and to stay home if not feeling

well. By working together, park staff and visitors can ensure parks remain safe spaces for all.

Additional information, including common questions and answers about the 2020 camping season, can be found at <https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/places-to-go/provincial-parks/Announcements>.

To book a campsite in Blackstrap Provincial Park, visit <https://saskparks.goingtocamp.com/create-booking/results>

Park visitors are encouraged to share their photos on social media using #saskparks for a chance to be featured on Sask Parks website and social platforms.

## *On The Lighter Side . . .*

Hyphenated. Non-hyphenated.

Oh, the irony!

I've been trying to come up with a telescope joke.

I'm still looking into it.

**“Saskatoon Southeast Newsletter”** is a message from Don Morgan, MLA Saskatoon Southeast. Your opinions are important and your letters, emails and phone calls on any issue relating to the provincial government are welcomed. Contact Don Morgan by calling 306-955-4755, emailing [mla@donmorgan.ca](mailto:mla@donmorgan.ca) or writing Don Morgan, MLA Saskatoon Southeast, 109-3502 Taylor Street East, Saskatoon, S7H 5H9.

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