

MUNICIPAL SERVICES DIVISION

2010-2011 ANNUAL UPDATE



I am pleased to present the 2010-11 annual report for the Municipal Services Division of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Nova Scotia is a strong, dynamic and vibrant province, and that's due in large part to the 55 municipalities that comprise it. No matter where we live – whether it's a quiet rural area or a bustling urban centre – we have such pride in our communities.

Municipalities do so much to foster that pride and sense of ownership that makes this province special.

I salute your hard work over the last year in helping your communities and your residents thrive, and I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Honourable John MacDonell

Minister
Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

SNSMR

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations [SNSMR] is the service delivery arm of the government and lead on improving access to government information and services for businesses, individuals and municipalities.

Municipal Services is a division within SNSMR that works directly with municipalities to offer programs and initiatives to help communities grow and remain strong and healthy.

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- 2010-2011 Highlights
- Client satisfaction survey
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- Capital and operating programs
- Staff contacts



*West Pubnico
Sewer Upgrade,
September 21,
2010*

 NOVA SCOTIA

2010-2011 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

In 2010-2011, the Municipal Services Division continued to focus on partnering with municipalities to help ensure fiscal stability in their communities. The Division helped ensure that programs were responsive and effective and continued to work towards making it easier for municipalities to interact with government.

PARTNERING WITH MUNICIPALITIES TO BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

- SNSMR continues to provide support for governance studies across the province. The Municipality of the District Digby recently completed a governance study. The Department also continues to provide support to both the Town of Canso and the Municipality of the District of Guysborough through the process of town dissolution.
- SNSMR continues to support a number of training conferences including: those organized by the UNSM and the AMA, orientation sessions for new municipal officials, and sessions for professional associations such as the Nova Scotia Planning Directors, the Association of Planning Technicians and the Municipal Development Officers Association.
- The Municipal Indicators Committee was formed in February 2010. A summary report was provided to the AMA in September 2010 with recommendations for improving the Municipal Indicators Program.

The Committee will continue to work on implementing recommendations in the upcoming fiscal year.

- A workshop facilitated by Grant Thornton, was held in June 2010 for municipal finance officers with an emphasis on new changes to the 2009-2010 Financial Information Return and the 2010-2011 Statement of Estimates. There was also open discussion on topics such as combining operating and capital funds and TCA challenges.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **The Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia was incorporated on June 14, 1971.**
- **The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) was established on August 15, 1906.**
- **The Municipal Government Act, or MGA, was passed in 1998.**

MAKING IT EASIER TO INTERACT WITH GOVERNMENT

- Municipal Services has received feedback on the Online Municipal Reporting System and acknowledges that there are some issues with the system. We are currently working with IT and striving to resolve the issues before the next reporting cycle.



*Halifax Burnside
Sewer work*

HIGHLIGHTS

ENSURING PROGRAMS ARE RESPONSIVE & EFFECTIVE

- CAP Review 2010-2011 has been completed. As part of the review, we obtained input from stakeholders, including UNSM, AMA, municipalities, commercial sector representatives, PVSC, tax payer associations and the general public. SNSMR also worked closely with UNSM to review options for the CAP program.
- The Legion Capital Assistance Program was introduced in July 2010 to provide Nova Scotia Legions with \$100,000 in assistance to upgrade their facilities. Eighteen Legions received funding in 2010-2011.
- Nova Scotia Transit Research Incentive Program (NSTRIP) provided approximately \$320,000 in funding to thirteen organizations to support capacity building initiatives intended to generate new and improved public transit services in rural and un-serviced urban areas of Nova Scotia.

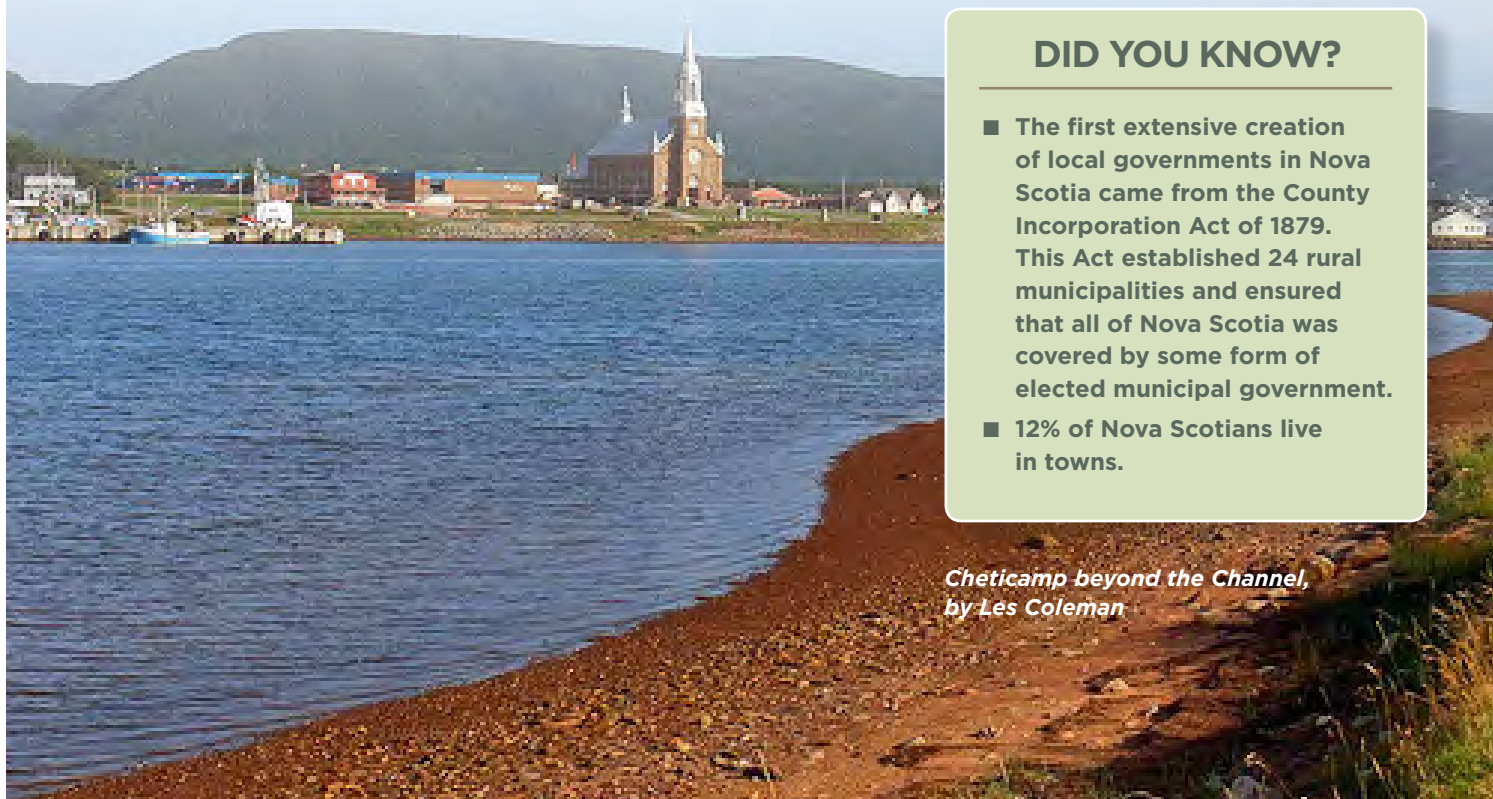
- The Emergency Services Provider Fund assisted 62 first responder organizations in their purchase of new equipment.
- Amendments were made to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to address issues such as tree cutting in urban areas. In addition, amendments were made to both the Municipal Government Act and the Charter to give municipalities more authority to address dangerous and unsightly premises.
- Since 2010-2011, SNSMR has been conducting an ongoing review of its responsibilities in relation to the Regional Assessment Appeal Court. Several issues were identified, including the need to attract and retain members of the Court. In order to address this issue, per diems were increased for the first time in over fifteen years. More improvements will follow in 2011-2012.



DID YOU KNOW?

- **The first extensive creation of local governments in Nova Scotia came from the County Incorporation Act of 1879. This Act established 24 rural municipalities and ensured that all of Nova Scotia was covered by some form of elected municipal government.**
- **12% of Nova Scotians live in towns.**

*Cheticamp beyond the Channel,
by Les Coleman*



CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Early in 2010, the Municipal Services Division launched its first ever online Client Satisfaction Survey. The survey consists of 13 questions aimed at measuring municipal representative and staff satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of the programs and supports we provide. The results of this survey help determine areas which require improvement and provide information for the key perform indicators.

In an effort to improve the survey response rate, this year we will have copies of the survey at both the AMA and UNSM conferences for municipal representatives to complete.

The survey will continue to be open and can be found at:

<https://surveys.gov.ns.ca/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=942JIn8>



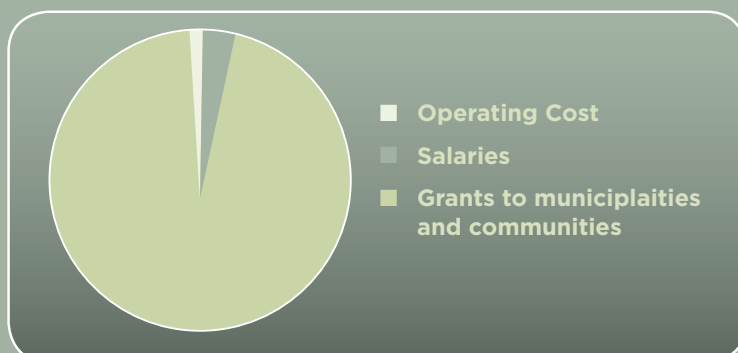
*Town of Springhill
water main replacement*

ACCOUNTABILITY BY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In 2009-2010, the Municipal Services Division reviewed and revised its key performance indicators to ensure that they were as informative as possible. As a result, this year Municipal Services is reporting on the following key performance indicators:

Performance Measure	Target	Result
Percentage of municipal claims that are processed within 60 days through the Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP)	2010-2011 - 75% 2011 - 2012 - 85% 2012-2013 - 95% 2013 -2014 - 98%	On Target - In 2010-2011, 100% of PCAP were processed within 60 days
Municipal client satisfaction with capacity building initiatives (for example, training or workshops)	2010-2011 - 75% 2011-2012 - 80% 2012-2013 - 85%	On Target - In 2010-2011, 80% of Client Satisfaction Survey respondents were happy with the content and quality of municipal services workshops
Overall municipal client satisfaction	80%	Slightly below target - In 2010-2011, 79% of Client Satisfaction Survey respondents were satisfied overall with the quality of service provided by the Municipal Services Division

BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY



Our annual budget in 2010-2011 was \$219,259,000, of which almost 98.2% went to municipalities in grants and programs.

Operating costs 2010-2011: \$796,000

Salaries 2010-2011: \$3,167,000

Grants to municipalities and communities 2010-2011: \$215,296,000

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2011-2012 AND BEYOND

Finalizing Stimulus Funding

Through the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Secretariat, SNSMR will ensure stimulus projects with extensions are completed by October 31, 2011 by providing advice and assistance to municipalities and by working with Infrastructure Canada and ACOA to ensure efficient delivery of the programs.

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment - Wastewater Effluent (CCME-MWWE) Standards Strategy

SNSMR will continue to lobby the federal government for a dedicated wastewater funding program to help municipalities meet the requirements of the CCME -MWWE strategy.

Municipal Climate Change Guide

SNSMR is helping municipalities meet the challenge of climate change with a focus on climate change adaptation at the community level. To facilitate this process, SNSMR is working closely with the NS Climate Change Directorate to develop a guide designed to assist municipalities with preparing these plans.

FOIPOP Guide

In 2011, SNSMR plans to release a new Administrators' Procedures Manual that will provide guidance and tips for municipal officials charged with information access and privacy responsibilities under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

Towns Task Force

The Towns Task Force has begun its work. SNSMR will continue to support its efforts of looking at issues facing towns across the province including: service delivery, demographics, development and planning and governance. It is anticipated that a preliminary report will be produced this fall.

Municipal Elections 2012

SNSMR is preparing to support the upcoming municipal elections in 2012 by updating the election handbooks and reviewing legislation. SNSMR will also be considering recommendations for improvement to the election process stemming from the AMA 2008 election debriefing.

Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review

The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review project was announced by the Premier at the 2010 fall UNSM Conference. This will be a collaborative review with UNSM and municipalities and will encompass all municipal programs. A full, collaborative review of provincial/municipal programs has not been conducted in over ten years. Programs will be reviewed to determine if they are properly structured to meet municipal needs. Consultation and collaboration with municipalities throughout this review will be critical and will start in the coming months.

AMA Spring Conference Session

SNSMR will be facilitating another session at the AMA Spring Conference for the Municipal Finance Officers which will include a presentation by the Province on SAP. The Province is offering municipalities the opportunity to implement the SAP Accounting System which would include support services at cost. Other topics to be discussed at the session will include presenting and interpreting consolidated financial statements, standard expenditure reporting, FRAM committee updates, information on any PSAB exposure drafts and other miscellaneous topics.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **There is a Women in Local Government Bursary Program. The Women in Local Government Bursary is designed to assist women employed in municipal government to pursue training, education and development opportunities to enhance their careers. For more information, visit <http://www.amans.ca/index.php?/home-page-articles/women-in-local-government.html>**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

STAFF CONTACTS:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/pdf/staff-contacts-program-2011.pdf>

MAJOR OPERATING GRANTS:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/pdf/major-operating-grants-2011.pdf>

MAJOR CAPITAL PROGRAMS:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/pdf/major-capital-programs-2011.pdf>

MUNICIPAL SERVICES DIVISION

Policy & Finance

- Property tax policy
- Provincial-municipal fiscal relations
- Municipal financial reporting standards
- Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) liaison

Grants & Programs

- Provincial, Federal and Federal/ Provincial Capital funding programs;
- Operating grants;
- Statutory grants;
- Municipal infrastructure

Planning & Advisory Services

- Governance, administration, legislation and inter-municipal co-operation
- Borrowing/debt monitoring
- Statements of provincial interest, provincial subdivision regulations
- Land use planning