



MORE PROJECTS, MORE OPPORTUNITY: PROVINCIAL BUDGET SETS NEW HIGH FOR CAPITAL SPENDING

By Reagan Reese Seidler, Director of Strategy & Engagement, SaskBuilds



The focus of this year's provincial budget is meeting the challenge posed by weakened resource revenues.

It's a challenge the construction sector has faced as much as anyone.

In the lead-up to budget, groups like the SCA urged the provincial government to build now, rather than later, to stimulate the economy while oil and potash prices recover.

Public reports from experts like CMC Saskatchewan and The Conference Board of Canada said the same. Even CUPE, days before budget, released its own report showing that out of all possible options for government

spending, investing in infrastructure has the highest possible economic impact.

Those calls were answered with the largest single-year capital commitment in Saskatchewan's history.

Breaking a record set last year, the Government of Saskatchewan will invest \$3.5 billion into infrastructure. It's a move that's good for the economy, says Paul Martin, local business commentator and chair of Martin Charlton Communications.

"Ultimately, capital is one of the critical factors in not just creating economic activity, but in fact building

a larger platform that the economy can operate on," Martin says. "The price of oil goes up and down. But capital, when you invest it, doesn't go away. Once it's put in place, it permanently elevates the platform of the economy."

For the second year in a row, the Highways budget will top \$1 billion. It continues construction of the Regina Bypass, an effort that has already involved nearly 100 local companies and will see overpasses opening this fall.

It also carries on work for the Martensville and Warman overpasses,

twins Highway 39 from Estevan to Bienfait, finishes twinning on 16 from Saskatoon and Clavet, and puts millions into northern transportation.

It was a budget “applauded” by the heavy construction sector, with the SHCA noting it “sends a positive message to industry.”

Education is also seeing a capital injection. Budget day began the 100-day countdown to the finish of 18 P3 schools, with over 70 per cent of companies involved from Saskatchewan. The budget also provides for planning two new schools in Rosthern and Weyburn, \$43 million in maintenance work, and \$21 million for post-secondary institutions.

One of the province’s largest builds at present is the new hospital in North Battleford. \$155 million is budgeted this year to continue the Graham-led project, expected to finish in summer 2018. Other health projects include electrical upgrades to Regina hospitals, \$15.5 million for continuing work on the Children’s Hospital, and \$6.7 million for construction of the Leader Integrated Health Facility.

More than \$279 million is going into municipal infrastructure, like Saskatoon’s new bridge.

And of course, the biggest investors are the Crowns.

SaskPower, in the midst of major moves to upgrade its transmission systems and move to renewable power, is expected to put \$1.3 billion into infrastructure this year.

SaskTel projects its own investments of about \$300 million representing upgrades to wireless networks and further roll out of high-bandwidth broadband service.

Adding in projects by SaskEnergy and SaskWater, Crowns are looking at investments worth more than \$2.1 billion.

“Solid capital investment will help Saskatchewan meet the challenge of a growing province, and strengthen the economy now and in the future,” said Finance Minister Kevin Doherty on budget day.

It’s a perspective that has SCA approval.

“As private sector work picks back up in late 2017 as anticipated by our forecast, ongoing public sector projects will help sustain the industry while delivering an excellent value to taxpayers,” says Manager John Lax. “Regardless of the price of oil or potash, infrastructure is critical to getting the products that drive the Saskatchewan economy to the global market we rely on.”



RobWel
CONSTRUCTORS LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

www.robwel.ca


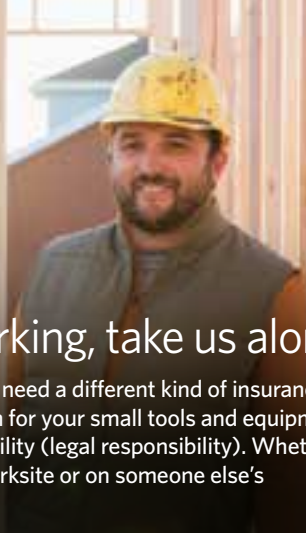
RobWel is your full-service project company. We strive to perform tasks for clients with safety, quality, and cost in mind. RobWel has extensive experience in the areas of mining, oil, gas and forestry. Our mission is to provide quality metal fabrication to the resource industries.

RobWel Constructors Limited Partnership is owned by the Clearwater River Dene Nation Group of Companies and has been providing construction, maintenance, manufacturing and fabrication services since 1990.





MEADOW LAKE OPERATION
704 - 9th Street Northwest, Box 2815, Meadow Lake, SK S9X 1Z6
Phone: (306) 236-3099 Fax: (306) 236-4080
E-mail: robwel@sasktel.net

Wherever you're working, take us along

At SGI CANADA, we know contractors need a different kind of insurance policy. Our Trades Pak offers protection for your small tools and equipment, potential loss of income, crime and liability (legal responsibility). Whether you're working in your shop, at your worksite or on someone else's property, we've got you covered.

Ask your SGI CANADA broker about Trades Pak today.

sgicanada.ca