

Sask. gov't restores library funding

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"We were wrong." Of everything that was said during Monday afternoon's news conference, provincial education minister Don Morgan needed just three words to explain the Saskatchewan Party government's reversal of \$4.8 million in funding cuts to the province's libraries.

"We certainly heard the message from people," said Morgan. "Our MLAs were getting visits and what people were telling us were things that made sense ... Clearly we should have consulted more on this one and we were wrong and we're going to make the change."

Announced last month, the 2017-18 provincial budget included a \$3.5 million or 58 per cent reduction in funding for Saskatchewan's regional libraries along with the complete elimination of \$1.3 million in funding for libraries in Regina and Saskatoon.

Staff layoffs were announced and the Single

Integrated Library System (province-wide borrowing) system was suspended.

A province-wide rally ensued, culminating in a Drop Everything and Read event April 7 that drew nearly 6,000 individuals to MLA offices and libraries in 89 communities.

Still, absent any further government announcements, Southeast Regional Library didn't mince words at its annual general meeting, passing a resolution to increase its bill to municipalities by \$5.77 per capita in order to keep the lights on until year's end — and suggesting the very future of the library was no sure thing past that date.

Monday's announcement changed all of that.

"From our standpoint, it's been relief," said James Richards, branch supervisor for Southeast Regional Library. "Big sigh, sit-back-in-your-chair relief. Quickly followed by happiness."

Among the announcement's other impacts, Richards confirmed that the previously-approved increase to municipal tax bills will

not be going through, and that the province-wide borrowing system should be back online within a week or two.

"We were cautiously optimistic, yeah, but really up until today we hadn't had any indication," said Richards. "As far as we knew, the government was really standing firm on things ... so we were moving ahead as if this day was not coming. But we're very happy it did come."

As for repercussions on the provincial budget, Morgan told reporters that he did not anticipate cuts in other areas to cover the cost of restored library funding and that the shortfall would likely be taken from the budget's \$300 million contingency fund.

"I understand that they restored (the funding) and I'm very happy and I think it's a step in the right direction," said Montmartre library board chair Cal Abrahamson.

"I think it would have been very detrimental to the whole system because it took years to build it up this far. In fact we just fin-

ished having our 50th anniversary of operation. One only has to look at Year 1 to Year 50 to see what progress has been made in this area."

Morgan also indicated a desire to work with the existing library system to find what he termed a "long-term" solution to the funding issue.

"I think it's worthwhile for us to listen to what the libraries are telling us and to find a path forward that works for them and for the communities they serve," said Morgan.

Richards was equally pragmatic in his own comments.

"We're very happy that the provincial government had the courage to re-think this decision, and that's not always easy," he said. "We're also very thankful that the people of Saskatchewan stood up for their public libraries. As a library board it was very gratifying to see that people treasure their public library system and were willing to fight for it. And it was really the people that saved it."

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Gutzke honoured at ratepayers' dinner

You would have understood if the loudest applause of the night had gone to local legend and pest control officer Fred Paslawski, or even to the event caterers.

(Show us a farmer who doesn't like to eat and we'll sell you a bridge while you're at it.)

But April 19 at the RM of Francis' annual ratepayers' dinner, the honour was reserved this year for Division 1 councillor Ernie Gutzke, who was honoured for his 30 years of service on RM council.

Gutzke was re-elected by four votes in October's municipal election, allowing him to reach the milestone.

At the time, he reminisced with The Forum about some of the larger projects he'd been involved with over the years, including the rehabilitation of the Francis grid (a.k.a. Highway 708) and the first-ever \$1 million cheque - for school tax remittance - that was cut by the RM.

Last October, Gutzke was also honoured as a recipient of the Saskatchewan Protective Services Medal in recognition of his 26 years with the Odessa Volunteer Fire Department.



RM of Francis councillor Ernie Gutzke, right, was honoured April 19 at the RM's annual ratepayers' dinner on the occasion of his 30th year as an RM councillor.

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GET A JOB!

Employment Opportunity

Kemoca Regional Park is accepting applications for: Park Groundskeeper

Applicant must be mechanically inclined, have general maintenance knowledge, ability to operate small equipment and work independently.

Send applications to: Kemoca Regional Park, ATTN: Sharon May, Box 330, Montmartre, SK, S0G 3M0; drop off at Municipal Office; or email: kemocarp@sasktel.net

Deadline to apply: May 8, 2017

THANK YOU



ODESSA FLAMES

The Odessa Jr. Flames Broomball club wishes to thank everyone who helped make their annual Steak Night fundraiser another HUGE success. This support helps our team to cover various costs throughout the year as well as at Nationals which were held in Estevan, Sk, Mar 27 - 31, 2017. Teams from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan filled the 8 team draw on the ladies side. We are proud to acknowledge that our team won the Bronze medal on the "B" side. Above is our National team which included the Odessa Flames as well as pick-ups from Bruno, Big River and Aberdeen.

Back row: Les Fraser (coach), Muraya Tuckanow, Morgan Schaeffer, Kelly Hryniuk, Josie Schwark, Jayden Borschtmayer, Carlee Huber, Julie Fallis (Asst Coach)
Middle row: Joan Schatz, Breanne McCarron, Mercedes Schindel, Robyn Schaffer, Brittany Weiman, Abby Lenz, Paige Flaman, Bradie Rist.
Front row: Kaitlyn Doezel, Savannah Schaeffer, Jaymie Fraser, Carly Schatz, Amanda Lockert, Lauren Meyers, Kristen Glas.

Notice of Preparation of Assessment Roll
Rural Municipality of Lajord No. 128

Pursuant to subsection 217(1) of The Municipalities Act, notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the Rural Municipality of Lajord No. 128 for the year 2017 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the Assessor from 8:00am to 5:00pm on the following days:

Friday, April 28, 2017 to Monday, June 26, 2017

A Bylaw pursuant to section 214 of The Municipalities Act has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment or classification to the Board of Revision is required to file a notice of appeal along with a \$50 fee to:

Christina Krismer, Secretary
Board of Revision
Box 36
Lajord, SK S0G 2V0

By the 26th day of June, 2017.

Dated this 28th day of April, 2017,

Lynette Herauf
Assessor