

News Release

For immediate release

March 19, 2026

SARM responds to 2026 provincial budget: focus on agriculture, infrastructure, health care, policing, and revenue sharing

Regina, Saskatchewan – The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) is welcoming key elements of the 2026 provincial budget and is calling for continued, long-term support for the services and infrastructure that keep rural Saskatchewan strong.

From SARM’s perspective, the budget will be judged by how well it supports four core pillars of rural Saskatchewan—agriculture, infrastructure, health care, and policing—along with a fair and predictable municipal revenue sharing framework that allows rural municipalities to plan and invest with confidence.

“A strong Saskatchewan depends on strong rural communities, and this budget is an important signal of how government intends to support the people who grow our food, power our economy, and maintain the critical infrastructure that ties this province together,” said SARM President Bill Huber. “Rural municipalities need predictable revenue, reliable roads and bridges, access to timely health care, and effective policing. When those pieces are in place, our people, producers, and businesses can do what they do best—drive growth for the entire province.”

Municipal Revenue Sharing

Municipal revenue sharing remains a central piece of the fiscal relationship between the province and rural municipalities. SARM and our members are pleased that the revenue sharing model continues to be transparent, formula-based, and predictable, enabling RMs to plan multi-year investments in infrastructure and services without facing unexpected shortfalls.

In 2026–27, rural municipalities will receive a total of \$111,847,000 through municipal revenue sharing, providing important stability for local planning and budgeting.

“Rural councils are being asked to do more every year, whether it’s maintaining infrastructure or supporting local services,” President Huber added. “A fair, predictable revenue sharing framework, paired with strong commitments on agriculture, infrastructure, health care, and policing, gives our members the stability they need to serve residents and businesses effectively.”

Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) Program

SARM is emphasizing that the increase to the RIRG program funding is a welcome sign and a positive signal that rural infrastructure is a priority for the province. Rural infrastructure is always a top priority for SARM members. The \$20.4 million in the RIRG program for this year will help RMs provide reliable roads and bridges essential for moving grain, livestock, inputs, and people, further supporting trade and investment in rural areas.

Health Care

Access to health care continues to be a critical issue across rural Saskatchewan. Ensuring that rural residents can receive timely care close to home is essential to community viability and attracting and retaining families, workers, and businesses. With health care identified as a central focus of the budget, SARM notes the government’s stated intent to protect and enhance frontline services, reduce wait times, and continue investments in health infrastructure and staffing.

One specific area SARM applauds is the farm stress line investment of \$200,000 and expanded mental health services that will be available to Saskatchewan agriculture workers and their families. Effective mental health supports like this are vital to rural Saskatchewan, where isolation, limited services, and the stresses of farming, small-business, and community life can significantly impact the wellbeing and resilience of residents.

Policing

Effective, adequately resourced policing and public safety services are also key pillars of rural quality of life. SARM continually advocates for measures that improve response times and visibility of policing in rural areas. We were pleased to see that this will be supported through \$190,000 in funding for the Small Town and Rural (STAR) policing grant program. This program will enable local police services to better support the RCMP and expand their proactive, community-based policing efforts to respond to the unique needs of rural communities.

SARM will be reviewing the details of the 2026 provincial budget and engaging with members to assess its impact on rural Saskatchewan. The association looks forward to ongoing dialogue with the provincial government to ensure that rural priorities remain front and centre in future fiscal and policy decisions.

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For interview requests, please contact:

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Background: *SARM is the independent association representing rural municipalities in Saskatchewan, serving as the primary advocate for its members before senior governments.*

Since 1905, SARM has been working to address the concerns of rural municipalities and ensure that their voices are heard by senior levels of government. We provide support to our members in dealing with the provincial and federal governments. We advocate on behalf of our members and help ensure their compliance with legislation and regulations.

SARM also has been mandated and plays an important role in the advocacy of Saskatchewan's agricultural sector. SARM believes that Agriculture is more than just an industry — it is the very foundation of our rural communities.

In compliance with the Act of Incorporation, SARM directly and lawfully engages in activities that tend to advance the interests of agriculture, including the handling, transportation, processing, and marketing of grain and grain products. Furthermore, the Act instructs that SARM be an actively engaged participant and member of the Canada Grains Council, as well as other organizations, associations, councils, congresses, and bodies advancing the interests of those who produce agricultural products.