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News Release

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Mar. 21, 2012

2:15 PM

Saskatchewan

Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

GOVERNMENT KEEPS PROMISES FOR FAMILIES, PARKS AND COMMUNITY RINKS

The Government of Saskatchewan is keeping its promises to expand the Active Families Benefit, improve infrastructure in provincial parks and support local community rinks.

Budget 2012-13 expands the Active Families Benefit to include all children under 18 years old. The benefit is a fully refundable tax benefit of up to \$150 per child and helps families with the costs of their children's participation in cultural, recreational and sports activities.

"The Active Families Benefit has been a successful program, but many parents told us the benefit would be even more helpful if it applied to older teenagers," Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Bill Hutchinson said. "We want to see children stay involved in positive activities like sports, dance and music lessons, and expanding the Active Families Benefit will make these activities more affordable for families."

Today's Budget also fulfills the government's promise to invest an additional \$10 million over the next four years to improve provincial parks. This year, an extra \$2.5 million will be spent on things like improving washroom and shower facilities, upgrading picnic and BBQ areas and adding more electrified campsites.

Additionally, the Community Rink Affordability Grant will provide an annual \$2,500 grant to assist communities to pay for the cost of operating indoor ice surfaces.

"These are the kind of affordable commitments our government is delivering to enhance the quality of life that Saskatchewan families enjoy," Hutchinson said.

The government recognizes the importance of the tourism industry to Saskatchewan's economy. The ministry is making changes to the Tourism Saskatchewan legislation to increase focus on and better co-ordinate government's efforts to promote the province. Today's budget will move the functions of Tourism Saskatchewan back into government with the creation of a Treasury Board Crown Corporation. The government's funding commitment to tourism remains unchanged.

Hutchinson said as part of its efforts to ensure provincial finances remain sustainable, the government reviewed its tax credit and economic programs. As a result, the government is discontinuing the Film Employment Tax Credit (FETC). As of April 1, 2012, the government will no longer be accepting FETC registrations. The government will honour productions already registered and issue tax credits accordingly. The FETC has cost the province \$100 million since its introduction in 1998. Eliminating the tax credit will save Saskatchewan taxpayers up to \$3 million this year and \$8 million once it is fully phased out by December 31, 2014.

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