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BUILDING SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, HIGHWAYS AND CROWN UTILITY PROJECTS WILL KEEP SASKATCHEWAN STRONG

More than \$3.5 billion is being invested in infrastructure projects through the Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan and by the province's Crown corporations in 2016-17.

Energy distribution, power transmission and telecommunications networks, schools, hospitals and highways are part of a record single-year infrastructure investment that will create jobs and economic activity this year and will meet the needs of a growing province in the longer term.

Government has committed more than \$1.7 billion to capital projects in its plan in 2016-17, an increase of more than \$400 million and more than 30 per cent over last year's capital budget. The province's major Crown corporations, including SaskEnergy, SaskTel and SaskPower, expect to invest close to \$1.8 billion in capital projects in 2016-17.

"Our four-year Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan establishes a commitment for \$5.5 billion in executive government capital over the next four years," Finance Minister Kevin Doherty said. "Combined with annual investment from the major Crowns, Saskatchewan is making needed investments now and for the future to keep our economy moving and our province strong."

The Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan includes \$875.7 million for transportation infrastructure investment in 2016-17, including \$500 million to continue construction of the Regina Bypass.

The Highways 2020 Plan outlines a three-year \$70 million surge to fix more highways, as promised by the government in the recent election campaign. That means \$30 million is being invested in preservation and rehabilitation to meet the first year of the commitment, with \$20 million committed for each of the next two years.

A number of 2016-17 projects include:

- \$13.5 million for the interchanges at Warman and Martensville;
- \$12.3 million for Highway 55 improvements;
- \$8.9 million for twinning on Highway 7 from Saskatoon to Delisle;
- \$8.1 million for twinning Highway 39 from Estevan to Bienfait;
- \$1.3 million for continued planning for Highway 6 and 39 twinning and passing lanes from Regina to Estevan; and
- \$1.0 million for passing lanes on Highway 5 from Saskatoon to Humboldt.

The 2016-17 Capital Plan invests \$127.5 million in municipal infrastructure including \$28.4 million for the New Building Canada Fund and \$10 million for the Saskatoon North Commuter Parkway Bridge.



There is \$391.4 million committed to K-12 schools and other education, including \$310.5 million for continued construction of 18 elementary schools on nine joint-use sites in Martensville, Regina, Saskatoon and Warman.

In 2016-17 \$2.2 million will fund the completion of the Southeast Regional College and \$23.6 million is provided in maintenance capital for post-secondary institutions.

The plan includes \$239.9 million in health care capital commitments in 2016-17 including \$168 million to continue construction of the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford-Integrated Correctional Facility.

A number of other health care capital investments include \$14.1 million for upgrades at Saskatoon Royal University Hospital and at Regina's General and Pasqua Hospitals. In addition, \$5.1 million will complete the construction of The Meadows long-term care facility in Swift Current and \$2.3 million will finish construction of the Kelvington integrated care facility.

The 2016-17 plan includes \$94.8 million for capital which supports government programs, including the new International Trade Centre at Evraz Place and the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence at the University of Saskatchewan. The plan also includes investment in the province's firefighting capacity, court and corrections facilities and affordable housing.

Government will borrow \$1.0 billion to help finance 2016-17 investments outlined in the Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan. The balance of the plan will be funded through a combination of revenue for capital through federal funding, public-private partnerships and investment by government entities.

"Saskatchewan has the second lowest debt to GDP ratio and among the highest credit ratings in Canada," Doherty said. "Combined with low interest rates, it is a cost effective time to borrow for capital."

At least two per cent of the value of these borrowings is set aside and invested each year to ensure cash is available to repay the debt as it comes due. This ensures debt pertaining to infrastructure assets will not be passed on to future generations.

Crown corporations are borrowing just more than \$745 million to finance capital this year. The balance for their investment is covered through cash flow from operations.

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