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BUDGET INVESTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

More than \$3.7 billion will be invested in Saskatchewan's infrastructure in 2017-18, as part of the budget announced today by Finance Minister Kevin Doherty.

Saskatchewan's commercial Crown corporations will invest a projected \$2.1 billion, and \$1.6 billion is projected to be invested by executive government ministries and agencies through the Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan.

"Solid capital investment will help Saskatchewan meet the challenge of a growing province, and strengthen the economy now and in the future," Doherty said. "Capital projects create construction jobs at a time when sectors such as mining and oil and gas are experiencing commodity price downturns."

The Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan includes nearly \$861.0 million for transportation infrastructure investment in 2017-18, including \$500.0 million to continue construction of the Regina Bypass.

Other 2017-18 projects include:

- \$26.6 million for continuation of the interchanges at Martensville and Warman;
- \$13.6 million for twinning of Highway 39 from Estevan to Bienfait; and
- \$5.2 million to finish the twinning of Highway 16 from Saskatoon and Clavet.

The 2017-18 Capital Plan invests more than \$279.0 million in municipal infrastructure, including \$201.0 million for cost-shared federal infrastructure programs, \$61.4 million for the Gas Tax Program, and \$15.0 million for the Saskatoon North Commuter Parkway Bridge.

More than \$119.0 million is committed to K-12 schools and other education infrastructure, including \$48.3 million to complete construction of 18 elementary schools on nine joint-use sites in Regina, Saskatoon, Martensville and Warman, and \$2.1 million to begin planning of two new school projects in Rosthern and Weyburn.

In 2017-18, \$21.5 million will be provided in maintenance capital for post-secondary institutions. The plan includes \$231.2 million in health care capital commitments in 2017-18, including \$155.0 million to continue construction of the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford-Integrated Correctional Facility.

A number of other health-care capital investments include \$3.5 million for infrastructure upgrades in Regina's hospitals, \$15.5 million for continued construction of the Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan (CHS) and an additional \$8 million for CHS information technology needs. In addition, \$6.7 million is being provided for construction of the Leader Integrated Health Facility.



The 2017-18 plan includes nearly \$80.0 million for capital which supports government programs, including information technology management infrastructure, the province's forest firefighting capacity, court and corrections facilities, and upgrades to Community Living residential and day-program facilities for adults with intellectual disabilities.

"The Saskatchewan Builds Capital Plan will be funded through federal funding, public-private partnerships, investment by government entities and \$1.1 billion of borrowing," Doherty said. "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 won't be passed on to future generations."

Major Crown projects in 2017-18 include \$1.3 billion at SaskPower, primarily to renew distribution and transmission systems, along with the expansion and renewal of electricity generation assets to meet customers' growing power needs.

Focused on the growth and integrity of its natural gas transmission and distribution systems, SaskEnergy is forecast to spend \$292.0 million to ensure safe and reliable service that meets growing customer demand.

Investment of \$302.0 million is projected at SaskTel to increase and upgrade its wireless and wireline networks, improve customer service through network growth and modernization, and continue the roll out of infiNet, SaskTel's high bandwidth broadband service.

SaskWater plans to invest \$81.0 million in 2017-18 to address aging infrastructure and customer growth.

Crown corporations are borrowing \$1.1 billion to finance capital this year. The balance for their investment is covered through cash flow from operations.

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