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Mar. 23, 2011

2:15 PM

Highways and Infrastructure 11-208

GOVERNMENT EXCEEDS HIGHWAYS COMMITMENT - \$2.2 BILLION OVER FOUR YEARS

The 2011- 12 Budget will continue to improve Saskatchewan's highways and transportation system with an investment of \$556.2 million. This brings total transportation spending to \$2.2 billion over four years.

"We made a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan that we would invest \$1.8 billion in our highways and roads over our first term to generate further economic growth and to build the Saskatchewan Advantage," Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter said. "We have kept that promise and exceeded it because our citizens deserve a safe and efficient transportation system."

This year's Highways and Infrastructure budget will improve 1,400 km of provincial highways. The budget includes \$285.3 million of capital construction, the largest capital investment in the province's history. Highlights of this year's construction program include:

- \$54.6 million to support major, multi-year projects, including:
 - Opening new twinned lanes on Highway 11 from south of Hague to north of Duck Lake and north and south of MacDowall. New lanes will also be graded from north of Duck Lake to south of MacDowall;
 - Completing the Highway 1-Lewvan Drive interchange at Regina;
 - Continued work on the West Regina Bypass to support development of the Global Transportation Hub; and
 - Continued work on the new St. Louis Bridge.
- \$91 million to upgrade 160 km of rural highways including:
 - Highway 219 from 13 km to 26 km north of the junction of Highway 15;
 - Highway 21 from Leader to 3 km north of the South Saskatchewan River; and
 - Highway 55 from Peerless to the Alberta border.
- \$76 million to repave 400 km of highways;
- \$1.4 million for improvements to community airports and shortline railways, a 40 per cent increase from 2010-11;
- New ramps on Highway 1 at White City and Balgonie; and
- \$10 million for a new program to upgrade community and tourism access roads. Details of this program will be released later this year.

With this year's work, the province will have improved more than 6,170 km of provincial highways over four years. This includes 1,485 km of repaving and 770 km of rural highway upgrades over the four years.

"As our economy expands and our communities continue to grow, we need to continue to invest in our transportation infrastructure," Reiter said. "Our government is committed to providing the 21st century transportation system this province needs and deserves."

Reiter also indicated that plans for the 2011 construction season will be released in the coming weeks.

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