

Review of the Naming Policy for Buildings and Geographic  
Features in Saskatchewan

**Final Report**

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This report is submitted in response to the request to review the naming policy related to government owned buildings, Heritage Buildings and provincial geographic features. The naming of any building or feature can be a controversial decision. No matter the logic for the name, there will always be someone who objects preferring a different name. It is important though to have a naming policy and in fact, a procedure of attaching names to buildings and geographic features in order to preserve and honour the History of our province and the people who have made considerable contributions to this province. The summary of the recommendations in the attached rewritten draft policy is as follows:

**1. Legislative and Executive Building in Regina, Saskatchewan.** The Legislative Building is one of our most prominent and important buildings in the province. It is a beautiful building full of symbolism representing our freely elected democratic system of government. The building houses the Legislative Assembly and offices for Members of the Legislature; the Cabinet chamber and offices for the Premier and members of the Executive Council, the media and offices for employees serving the government of Saskatchewan. Even though the proceedings in the Legislative Chamber can be very partisan and heated, the building itself has a history of being nonpartisan and is there to serve all parties equally.

There are various galleries in the Legislative Building where certain past office holders are honoured such as former Lieutenant Governors and Premiers, former Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature, former Speakers, former First Nations Chiefs and recipients of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. In all cases,

everyone from all political parties or nonpartisans are honoured in an equal way. In the rotunda of the building, there are three busts of political leaders--TC Douglas, John G Diefenbaker and T Walter Scott-- which might be viewed as being partisan except for the fact that all three parties that existed before 1997 are represented in the three busts. The building thus takes on a tone of being neutral and nonpartisan in honouring past leaders.

It is therefor recommended that the Legislative Building never be named after any one person in the province. In like manner, it is recommended that a policy be adopted that no partisan political plaques be mounted on the walls of the building to honour any political event or anniversary. If such a partisan plaque is attached to the building, it would violate the nonpartisan effect of the building. The Legislative Building must maintain its status as being nonpartisan or at least to be there to serve all political parties in the province.

**2. Government House.** In like manner, the Government House must remain as a public building without being given a name of an individual. With the exception of the interpretive centre and several rooms which has been named after former Lieutenant Governors, no other names are attached to the building. It is argued that like with the Legislative Building, Government House should remain a politically neutral centre for the offices of all Lieutenant Governors and as a museum for history of the Crown in Saskatchewan. It is thus recommended that no name of an individual should be attached to Government House.

**3. Court Houses.** At the commencement of this study, the option of naming the Court Houses of the province after former Chief Justices was considered. It was noted that to date, no Court House has been given an individual's name. On reflection and in talking with people skilled and experienced in the administration of justice, it became apparent that the same argument for not naming the Legislative Building applied equally to the Court Houses. A Court House is the neutral place where the law is applied equally to everyone without favour. By giving a name of a person to a Court House, it could disturb this sense of equality and neutrality. Even though this province has had a record of excellent Chief Justices, each individual has had to make controversial decisions from time to time which could cast a reflection on the neutrality of the building. It is therefore recommended that no names of individuals be attached to any of the Court Houses in the province.

**4. Naming Policy.** The province of Saskatchewan has had a naming policy for public buildings for many years. As mentioned above, naming can be controversial. During this review, representation from several people has been received urging that certain names be removed from publicly owned buildings and replaced with different names. This argument can sometimes be attributed to strongly held partisan political beliefs. Some have argued that certain persons who had a building named after them were not worthy of the honour and that other people are more worthy. After much consideration on this point, it is recommended that no names be removed from public buildings or geographical features unless that person so named has committed and was convicted of a grievous crime or immoral act that brings disgrace to the building or the province. In any other case, to remove a name might be viewed as being partisan. It is

recommended that the naming policy be as nonpartisan as possible but once a name is affixed to a building, it should stay there. Under the existing policy, a person being honoured had to have been deceased. Even though the honouree is deceased by the time of the naming, family members of the honouree are still alive and could be offended if their relative was disgraced by having their name removed from a building for no reason other than partisan points of view. It is recommended that the names on the buildings remain but that other persons not honoured yet could have a courtyard surrounding the building, for example, named after a particular person. Thus the Sturdy Stone Building in Saskatoon could maintain its name but have the court yard surrounding the building be named after a former Premier. Roy Romanow Court or plaza, for example, could surround the Sturdy Stone Building thus bestowing new honours on a former leader of this province without removing the names already there.

The existing naming policy specifies that a building or geographic feature could be named after someone who had been deceased for at least five years. The logic behind this policy is that no name of a living person could be used because that person could later go on to damage their reputation which would bring dishonour to the building and the province. With the present policy, it is still possible for the records to show later that the deceased person had some dark aspects of their past that would cause dishonour on that building or the province. The present policy seems very limiting. To honour a leader for work done in service of the province, it is preferable to have that person present when the building or geographic feature is being named. The honouree is thus aware of the thanks and the honour being bestowed on them. The naming committee

should take special care in selecting names of people that they be upstanding citizens who would be very unlikely to do something later that would bring disgrace to their name. In the unlikely event that this happened, the name could be removed from the building or geographic feature. Recipients of the national honour of the Order of Canada or the provincial Saskatchewan Order of Merit are, in most cases, still living at the time of the receipt of the award. In rare cases, the honour has been withdrawn later but this is very rare. The same policy could be applied to the naming of buildings and geographic features. Representation was made that by using the names of living persons, this would detract from the honour given to men and women who lost their lives in war or in emergency services. This is one possible interpretation but if proper care is taken to ensure that all names used in naming buildings or geographic features are of people of the utmost high standing and prominent service, the honour given to veterans will not be diminished.

**5. Naming Committees.** It is recommended that naming committees review the lists of people who have resided or who do reside in the province and who have received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit or the Order of Canada for possible names for provincial buildings or geographic features. These awards are vetted very carefully before they are presented. To date, very few Saskatchewan recipients of these awards have disgraced himself or herself after the receipt of the award. This is clearly a stable corps of solid individuals who have contributed to the public good in a variety of ways. The further honour of naming a building or geographic feature after them would be one more way of honouring that individual.

**6. Toponymist.** In reviewing the present naming policy, it is apparent that there are two distinct and different processes for naming buildings and geographic features. The naming of buildings has been handled by the Department of Central Services while the geographic features have been named on recommendation of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. The Foundation has received research services and expert advice from the Heritage Conservation Branch of the Department of Parks, Culture, and Sport. This service has proven to be wise and based on sound research skills and knowledge of national standards. The Foundation has been in existence in its present form for approximately two years and has performed well. There is however, some confusion in the public's mind as to how to make a nomination of a name and where to send such a nomination. It therefore seems logical that there should be one point where nominations can be made both for public buildings and geographic features.

It has been further noted that there are only three jurisdictions (Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and North West Territories) in Canada that do not have a Toponymist, an expert in naming. Many other jurisdictions have devoted much time and effort to honouring the history of their province or territory with an active naming program and related publicity to get the public involved in honouring their past. In order to avoid the present confusion on how to nominate a worthy person for naming, it is recommended that a Provincial Toponymist be appointed with a small staff in the Heritage Conservation Branch to receive and review all nominations for both buildings and geographic features. This officer would be skilled and educated in the history of the province and the national policies on naming. When a nomination has been received, and after thorough review, the Toponymist could refer the name on to the building

naming committee or the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation for consideration. The nomination would be forwarded on to the appropriate committee with a detailed and well researched background of the person nominated and the object of the nomination.

The present naming policy prescribes the creation of a new committee each time a name is suggested for public buildings. This seems to be a waste of time and could delay the selection process. It also could mean that there is no accumulation of knowledge and expertise in selecting appropriate names. It is therefore recommended that a continuing committee be established that would be composed of five persons with broad knowledge of the province and a sense of the historic importance of the people being nominated. Appropriate people to sit on this committee could be the Cabinet Secretary, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Provincial Archivist, a representative of the Department of Culture, Parks and Sport and another from the Department of Central Services. The members of the committee should be nonpartisan and knowledgeable about the history of the province. Advice could be sought from the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation from time to time on the heritage value and history of that nomination.

For nominations for geographic features, the toponymist could forward the nomination on to the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation (SHF) for review. The SHF is a continuing body that reviews nominations for names of geographic features. This Foundation has been particularly successful in the past in selecting names for the countless lakes in Northern Saskatchewan. It is recommended that the Foundation continue the good work it has been doing thus far.



For the creation of the office of a toponymist, a small budget will be needed but it would not be excessive. This office could not only review all nominations and begin an initial review of background information before passing the nomination on to the relevant committee but could also lead a public awareness campaign to encourage people to make nominations for both buildings and geographic features. This educational program could also raise the public awareness of our province's history and encourage public support of our past leaders.

Once the appropriate committee has reviewed the nomination for a building or geographic feature, a recommendation would be forwarded to the Deputy Minister of Central Services related to buildings and to the Deputy Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport for geographical features for onward recommendation to the appropriate Minister for approval. A special ceremony for the naming should be publicized to encourage public participation.

**7. Political Leaders.** Many buildings in the province have been named after former Premiers. This is an excellent program in honouring and remembering our past political leaders. However, some former Premiers have not been honoured in this way as yet. Some former Premiers were not totally accepted by the population while in office and still have a negative image in the minds of some people. Thus, there will be controversy if some are honoured, even after many years, by having a building or a geographic feature named after them. One has to remember though that every individual, who has been elected Premier, was chosen by the people at one time to fill this role. One

exception is former Premier Lloyd who became Premier midterm after Premier Douglas resigned but was not elected as Premier in 1964. Every Premier has his detractors and thus naming a building or geographic feature after a Premier will always stir up some controversy. Yet the service given by each of these individuals should be marked and that part of our history should be remembered. It is thus recommended that buildings or geographic features in the province should be named after former Premiers. Frederick Haultain served as Premier of the North West Territories but never as Premier of Saskatchewan. Nonetheless, he should also be recognized by having a building or feature named after him. To date, Premiers Haultain, Martin, Gardiner, Anderson, Thatcher, Blakeney, Devine, Romanow and Calvert have yet not been honoured in this way. It is recommended that the names of these former Premiers be given to provincial buildings or geographic features. See attachment B for a list of possible buildings or geographical features that could receive the name of a former Premier. In the selection of names for public buildings, care must be taken to ensure that the importance of the position held by a person in the past should equate to the importance of the building being identified. Premiers should receive the greatest honour and recognized in a nonpartisan way as former statesmen.

**8. Public Involvement.** The present practice of having the public suggest names for certain buildings should be continued and having these nominations reviewed by a committee as noted in point 5 above. A weakness in this policy is that there has been very little publicity seeking nominations from the public. It is recommended that the Provincial Toponymist or the Department of Central Services and/or the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation initiate a publicity campaign from time to time urging people to

offer names for buildings and geographical features. This publicity could also be used as an educational program to make the public aware of our provincial history as being shown through the names on our provincial buildings and geographic features. It is important for this policy to continue to recognize important leaders of our community over and above former Premiers. This educational program could also provide points of interest for visiting tourists in the province. Our American neighbours have shown us how marking the nation's history and its leaders can be developed into popular tourist attractions.

It is hoped that the above recommendations which are included in the proposed new policy in attachment A will help the people of Saskatchewan recognize important and influential leaders of our past by attaching their names to public buildings and geographic features in the province. The political stripe or past record of accomplishment should be viewed in a nonpartisan way. Government should not use their own political bias in choosing names. If this were to happen, after a change of government, the names could be subject to change or a raft of political names could be considered which would be unfortunate. Political leaders in the United States of America are honoured in a nonpartisan way after they have left office. An example of this was when recently, the Presidential Library honouring former President George W Bush was opened, there were four former Presidents (two Republican and two Democratic) plus the incumbent, a Democratic President, present. Even though they would likely not have agreed on many points of public policy, they came together to honour a past President. This spirit of nonpartisanship would serve Saskatchewan well as we honour our past leaders and the history of our province.

The emphasis of this report on the naming of buildings and geographic features after former Premiers should not be interpreted as ignoring all other leaders in the province. The policy, as outlined in Attachment A specifies that First Nation leaders, and leaders in other fields other than government should be recognized.

Summary of recommendations:

1. That the Legislative and Executive Building, Government House and the Court Houses not be named after an individual and that plaques marking partisan political anniversaries not be affixed to the walls of these buildings.
2. That the naming of a building or geographical feature be nonpartisan and that the present names given to buildings and features in the province be not removed unless it has been discovered that that person honoured with his/her name on a building or feature has committed a grievous crime or immoral act.
3. That courtyards surrounding government buildings be eligible to be given a name to honour a past leader of the province.
4. That the existing policy of not using a name of a person until after they have been dead for five years be amended to allow the naming of worthy persons who are still alive.
5. That persons who lived or are living in Saskatchewan and who have received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit or the Order of Canada be considered for the honour of having a building or geographic feature named after them.

6. That a Provincial Toponymist be appointed and attached to the Heritage Conservation Branch of the Department of Parks, Culture and Sport with a modest budget to receive naming nominations for buildings and geographic features.
7. That the Provincial Toponymist research the background of each nomination before forwarding it on to a committee under the Department of Central Services or the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation.
8. That the Provincial Toponymist and staff in the Heritage Conservation Branch undertake public education campaigns to encourage the public to nominate worthy candidates and to become more aware of our history.
9. That the Heritage Conservation Branch plan events to highlight the naming of a building or feature with emphasis on the history of our province.
10. That the appropriate committee make recommendations to the Minister of Central Services or Parks, Culture and Sport.
11. That the naming committee under the Department of Central Services be permanent and composed of five officials to review all nominations for buildings and that the Heritage Foundation be encouraged to continue its solid efforts in the naming of geographic features.
12. That every Premier of the province including Frederick Haultain have a building or geographical feature named in their honour and that the naming be done in a nonpartisan nature and with dignity.

Special thanks goes to the Clerk of the Executive Council, Deputy Ministers of Parks, Culture and Sport and Central Services, the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, officials within the Heritage Conservation Branch and the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation for their time and recommendations which have become part of this report. Several members of the public offered comments and suggestions that have helped in the writing of this policy. It is hoped that these recommendations will assist government in formalizing a naming policy for both government buildings and geographic features and in so doing, recognizing the people of this province who have contributed in various ways to the history of our province.

## **Attachment A**

Naming Policy for buildings and geographic features of the province

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Introduction

Central Services owns a number of buildings throughout Saskatchewan. There is a need to have a policy and procedure in order to name or rename buildings. In like manner, there are many geographical features in the province that could be named on recommendation of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation.

Central Services will form a permanent and long standing committee which will review the requests and make a recommendation to the Deputy Minister and ultimately the Minister of Central Services. The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation will be continued and will make recommendations to the Deputy Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport and ultimately to the Minister.

Principles for the Naming of Buildings and Geographic Features:

- Central Services is committed to building a strong corporate image for the Government of Saskatchewan.
- As part of building a strong image, Central Services must recognize prominent provincial and community individuals for their accomplishments by naming a building in their honour.
- Central Services may choose a name to recognize unique characteristics of a location like physical or cultural features.

- The Department of Parks, Culture and Sport through the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is equally committed to recognizing the history of Saskatchewan through the naming of geographic features.

## Guidelines

The following guidelines will be used to help the committee decide on a building or geographic feature name to be put forward to the responsible Deputy Minister and Minister.

1). A Provincial Toponymist will be named to receive nominations for the naming of both buildings and geographic features and will research the background to each nomination and will forward them to the appropriate committee.

2). A building naming committee under the Department of Central Services will be formed that will continue and will be ready to review nominations when they are presented. The committee will consist of a minimum of five members including a representative from Central Services, the Provincial Archives, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Cabinet Secretary and Parks Culture and Sport. Special advisers may be consulted from time to time when needed. Each of the above named will select their own representatives to participate on the committee.

The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation will be continued and will review nominations for geographical features.

3) Nominations for naming a building or geographic feature will be made to the appropriate committee which will review and forward their recommendations to the



Deputy Minister and then to the Minister. The committee, government, non-profit organizations, societies and the public can make nominations.

4) There will be no discrimination as to ethnic origin, political beliefs, sex, creed, or colour in the determination of the name.

5) Nominations in honour of individuals must meet the following criteria to be considered:

- Nominations will be a prominent individual in the history of Saskatchewan. He or she will have resided in the province for at least 10 years with the exception of the Governor General or members of the Royal family.
- The nominated individual will have made an outstanding contribution to the province through one or more of the following:
  - i. Served as an elected representative to either the federal or provincial government with preference being given to recognizing all past Premiers.
  - ii. Made a significant contribution in the field of agriculture, arts, education, industry, law, medicine, politics, religion, science or sports on the provincial, national or international level.
  - iii. Made a significant contribution to the province as a pioneer.
  - iv. Been a casualty in war service.
- The person nominated may still be living but must be of good character and likely to maintain that solid reputation for the remainder of their lives even after a building or feature may have been named after them.

6) Nominations of individuals who have served as a Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan or Governor General of Canada or a member of the Royal Family will also be considered.

7) In addition to the nominations submitted, the Provincial Toponymist may solicit nominations from the general public through regular publicity campaigns.

8) The name being considered should be unique to the extent that it will not be confused with the name of an existing building, property or geographical feature.

9) Building criteria for a property to be named includes the following:

- Building must have an economic life of 25 years and an expectation of being occupied for a minimum of 10 years.
- Building must be owned by Central Services or under a longterm lease by Central Services.

10) Buildings or geographical feature will be considered for renaming in the following circumstances:

- When an individual honouree has been proven to have committed an illegal or immoral act during their lifetime.
- There is a change to the occupancy of the building.
- A special circumstance warrants that the name is no longer valid.

11) As there may be public interest and community sensitivities, public input will be considered when naming a Central Services-owned building or geographic feature.

12) Official naming of the building or feature will be identified with signage or plaque. A departmental representative will determine the location of the sign or plaque.

### **Process**

1. Nominations may be requested by the Provincial Toponymist from the general public, government departments and agencies, the building tenant of single tenant buildings or a representative of the tenants in a multi-tenant building (i.e. from all-tenants committee), public organizations or from the Building Naming Committee or the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. The Provincial Toponymist, on behalf of both naming committees, will regularly issue a public call seeking new nominations for specific buildings or geographic features. Nominations may include an individual's name, department or agency name, physical or cultural feature of special significance to the building, the local community or geographical feature.
2. Nominations will be submitted in writing to the Provincial Toponymist.
3. The DM of Central Services will appoint the Chairperson of the Building Naming Committee. Member organizations will be requested to appoint their representatives to the committee. The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation will continue as presently constituted.
4. The Naming Committees will meet from time to time to consider nominations received.
5. The Provincial Toponymist will provide the committees with the background information on the nominations.
6. The Naming Committees will be responsible to ensure thorough research has been conducted to validate the nomination and to ensure the worthiness of the nominee.

While undertaking the research, input may be solicited from the occupants of the "to be named" building, heritage stakeholders, organizations the nominee was affiliated with (i.e. the Legion), agricultural society, historical societies and special events organizations. The Heritage Conservation Branch of the Department of Parks, Culture and Sport will provide expertise on the heritage aspects of the nominations to both committees.

7. The Committee will review the background information on each nomination and match it to the established criteria. The nominations will be prioritized.
8. The recommendation will be publicized to obtain public reaction to the proposed name prior to submission for final approval.
9. The final recommendation from the committee will be forwarded to the DM who will seek sign off from the Minister.
10. The DM will inform Communications of their decision. Communications will inform the Committee of their approval or denial of the recommendation.
11. Official public notice will be provided through the Saskatchewan Gazette.
12. The Committee will make a request to Central Services or Culture, Parks and Sport to affix the name to the building or geographic feature along with the information that should appear on the plaque.

The Provincial Toponymist together, with the respective naming committee will decide on the method of the announcing the naming to the public and holding an event to name the building or geographic feature.

## Appendix B

There are many former Premiers who have not yet been honoured with a building or a geographic feature being named after them as follows:

Frederick WAG Haultain--Premier 1897-1905 North West Territories

William Melville Martin--Premier 1916-1922 Represented the Regina area

James Garfield Gardiner -- Premier 1926-1929 and 1934-1935 Lemberg and Fort Qu'Appelle area

JTM Anderson--Premier 1929-1934 Melville, Grenfell and Saskatoon

Wilbert Ross Thatcher--Premier 1964-1971 Moose Jaw

Allan Emrys Blakeney -- Premier 1971-1982 Regina

Donald Grant Devine--Premier 1982-1991 Estevan

Roy John Romanow--Premier 1991-2001 Saskatoon

Lorne Albert Calvert--Premier 2001-2007 Moose Jaw and Saskatoon

Several possibilities are possible re naming after former Premiers as follows:

1. Even though there is a building in Regina named after Walter Scott, it could be possible for the new psychiatric centre being built in the Battlefords to be named after former Premier Scott. The historic records show that he suffered from manic depression (bi-polar) all of his life and yet was our first Premier and elected as Premier three successive times. There is enough distance between Regina and the Battlefords to be able to have two buildings named after Scott without creating confusion in the public mind.
2. The new provincial laboratory building in Regina could be named after A E Blakeney. He represented Regina and was Premier for 11 years. Another option

could be that the Provincial Laboratory could be named after a prominent medical figure in our province.

3. The court yard surrounding the Sturdy Stone Building in Saskatoon could be named after Roy Romanow. He was Premier for 10 years and represented Saskatoon.
4. One of the reservoirs created by either the Alameda or Rafferty dams could be named after Grant Devine. He was Premier for two terms and his government built these two dams. The Rafferty dam was named after a local person in the community and thus the name should not be changed but the name for the Alameda dam could be changed because it was named after a nearby town.
5. That then leaves former Premiers Haultain, Martin, Gardiner, Anderson, Thatcher and Calvert as possible names for either buildings or geographic features.