

**Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service
2008-09 Recipients**

Individuals

Joan Nielsen – Education

Leadership

Joan Nielsen has been the central person responsible for implementing the Student Data Tracking System (SDS). Developed in cooperation with First Nations education authorities, SDS allows school officials to monitor the movement of individual students between schools and school systems, determining when a student has left a school and has not been re-enrolled in another. SDS includes 98 per cent of all school-aged children enrolled in educational programs. It is the only online system of its type in Canada, operating in real time, allowing for the continual input of information that changes daily. Ms. Nielsen was instrumental in establishing the Memorandum of Understanding that supports this initiative and traveled to communities to build capacity, offering direct support to 2,400 school officials. SDS will be part of a national Aboriginal Education Action Plan being coordinated by Saskatchewan on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).

Karen Unger – Social Services

Quality Service

Karen Unger developed the schooling program for the Musqua School at the Red Willow Centre in Saskatoon. Youth enrolled in the school are usually high needs at-risk youth that have had little to no schooling. She continuously assesses the specific needs of each student, making individual learning plans that take into account cognitive disabilities, behavioural issues, psychiatric diagnoses and issues like attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. In order to help the students learn to interact positively with others in a learning environment, Ms. Unger keeps them organized, acknowledges good behaviour and works hard to keep them interested in learning with field trips, videos and arts programs. Of the nearly 200 youth to attend the school, 87 per cent have been reintegrated into appropriate school placement.

Teams

Grants Administration Unit – Municipal Affairs

Quality Service

This team played a key role in the delivery of the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative, Municipal Economic Enhancement Program and several federal-provincial cost-sharing programs. They assisted in the development of a new Municipal Operating Grant formula and provided an innovative approach to program development and delivery, ensuring municipalities received funding and were able to commence project construction quickly. They also consulted with the federal government to streamline the traditional application and the reporting and legal requirements of new federal-provincial funding programs to allow municipalities easier access to funding. Over the last five years, funding through Grants Administration has increased 159 per cent, to the highest level of federal-provincial funding ever committed. This will have a lasting impact, bringing communities new subdivisions, water, and wastewater systems, roads, bridges, and recreational facilities all providing long-term environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Immigration Services Division – Advanced Education, Employment and Labour

Quality Service

This team consulted with nearly 300 immigration stakeholders before initiating reforms that streamlined processes required to nominate and settle immigrants in the province, without any additional costs. The project has accounted for nearly 100 per cent of growth in immigration levels, critical to addressing labour shortages and has resulted in the development of a new settlement program framework and programs, and community-based delivery system. The team initiated a pilot project that accelerated the permanent residency of hotel and hospitality workers and initiated the Family Class program allowing immigrants to reunite with their families. They have also been instrumental in the interpretations for SGI driver's license testing, English language classes and community orientation for the settlement and retention of newcomers.

Orphan Well and Facility Liability Team – Energy and Resources

Quality Service

This team worked with oil and gas associations to create a comprehensive program to pay for the decommissioning and reclamation of orphaned wells and facilities. Costs are covered through a security deposit and orphan fund levy collected from oil and gas companies, ensuring reclamation rests with the industry and not landowners or rural municipalities. The program includes factors designed to support the long-term economic prosperity of the smaller oil and gas companies. These factors are unique to Saskatchewan, accommodating the large number of small oil and gas operations in the province. The program provides clarity and transparency to operators in their responsibilities and greatly limits Saskatchewan's potential of exposure to liabilities. The program provides a balanced approach of mitigating orphan risk while ensuring the province continues to have a robust and prosperous oil and gas industry.

The Auger Box Team – Highways and Infrastructure

Innovation

This team developed the Auger Dump Truck Box, a combined sand/salt spreader and dump box auger system that is used to spread salt and sand in the winter and to auger out cold or hot asphalt in the summer. The innovated design allows for a reliable lightweight truck box that provides long service in a highly corrosive environment. The development included extensive and detailed research on technical feasibility and financial impacts. The result is a more effective placement of salt/sand on the road and less material wasted through spillage and usability of trucks year-round. The box has become the preferred choice on all tandem trucks built since 2006 and has been sold to the City of Prince Albert and the R.M. of Wilton. The auger box production is done through the ministry's Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program, contributing to increasing the skills of Aboriginal apprentices. The ministry applies sales revenue to the partnership training costs of the apprenticeship program.