

Government of Saskatchewan Red Tape Reduction Update

A key Government of Saskatchewan priority is to increase the competitiveness of the province's business environment and grow the economy. Removing barriers to growth such as outdated or inefficient regulations and creating a more enabling regulatory framework will promote economic growth. The government tasked Enterprise Saskatchewan (ES), the province's economic development agency, with finding ways to improve legislation, regulations and government processes to better promote business competitiveness, productivity and economic growth without compromising protection of the public interest.

In the fall of 2008, Enterprise Saskatchewan created the Regulatory Modernization Council (RMC), a council made up of private sector leaders, to provide advice to the government on initiatives to reduce regulatory barriers that inhibit the competitiveness of businesses in the province. The RMC has developed a workplan with initiatives to enhance the regulatory environment.

The *Red Tape Reduction Update* provides examples of what ministries, Crowns and agencies have done to reduce regulatory barriers and foster greater co-operation and service delivery for businesses and citizens in the province in the following areas:

1. Improve government's regulatory client service;
2. Expand and enhance online services;
3. Reduce administrative and paperwork burden;
4. Adopt modernized regulatory and compliance alternatives;
5. Reduce regulatory overlap, duplication, and redundancies;
6. Build regulatory capacity within government; and
7. Enhance regulatory transparency and accountability.

1. Improve Government's Regulatory Client Service

The **Ministry of Finance** implemented the *Taxpayer Service Commitments and Standards Code* to improve public service to taxpayers and vendors. The Code describes the services that the Revenue Division offers to its stakeholders and sets performance standards for those services. Enterprise Saskatchewan assisted with the process and will work with other Ministries interested in establishing service standards.

The **Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation** (SCIC) will begin administering the AgriStability Program in January 2010. SCIC will provide direct access to local knowledgeable staff throughout the province, ensuring a more timely and reliable program.

The **Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour** has established a Canada-Saskatchewan Rapid Response Team to enhance client service by assisting businesses and workers impacted by the global economic downturn through proactive support and information about employment services, training and job opportunities, labour standards, Employment Insurance, and information specific to immigrant workers.

The **Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour** is implementing its Immigration Strategy which includes attracting entrepreneurial immigrants to the province, enhancing settlement and integration of support for new immigrants to Canada, and working to enhance foreign worker protection.

Information Services Corporation now offers a tiered pricing model with guaranteed turnaround times for mineral certification services. Customers can also access a priority service which allows their work to commence immediately and continue until finished.

2. Expand and Enhance On-line Services

Enterprise Saskatchewan is responsible for the provincial implementation of BizPaL, a one-stop website for information on business permits and licenses required by all three levels of government. BizPal has been expanded to 503 sectors across 68 Saskatchewan municipalities.

Enterprise Saskatchewan worked collaboratively with the ministries of **Justice** and **Finance** and **Information Services Corporation** and the **Information Technology Office** in the development of a one-stop business registration service. The business case was completed in June 2009. The collaborating agencies are currently seeking funding to implement the new one-stop business registration service.

The **Ministry of Municipal Affairs** is developing SOLA, the Subdivision On-Line Application system, to substantially improve client service and reduce processing time. SOLA is an electronic application system that will enhance the review of subdivision applications for new residential, commercial and industrial lots.

The **Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour** has implemented enhancements to the *Going to Saskatchewan* immigration portal to increase access to on-line information of interest to people considering immigrating to the province including community information and programs and services available to facilitate the settlement and integration of new residents in Saskatchewan.

The **Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport's** archaeology program is upgrading its Land Developer's Screening Tool which serves to expedite the development review and approval process. The on-line map-based screening tool enables land developers to immediately determine if their proposed project will pose any heritage resource concerns. Projects with no heritage resource concerns are cleared instantly. Developers with projects that may pose a heritage resource concern are guided through the regulatory review and approval process. The self-screening tool is being expanded to include the entire southern half of the province.

Information Services Corporation (ISC) is expanding the types of maps and geographic information from across government into one searchable and easy to use website called GeoSask. Businesses, utilizing GIS-based datasets to assist in their decision making processes. Oil and gas and other resource-based companies, as well as other government ministries, will benefit with easy access to geographically-based data from a single comprehensive source.

Information Services Corporation's Land Registry Online Submission (OLS) incorporates nearly all land registry transactions including estate transactions, surviving joint tenant, transmission, alternate authority, interest assignments, and interest amendments.

The **Ministry of Finance** is actively promoting the use of electronic tax filing to businesses across the province. SETS, the Saskatchewan Electronic Tax Services, allows businesses to save time and money by filing and paying tax returns and viewing tax account information via the Internet. SETS allows business owners to focus their time and attention on managing and growing their business by reducing the time they spend on complying with tax and regulatory issues.

The **Ministry of Energy and Resources** is working to modernize its approach to mineral dispositioning. The Mineral Administration Registry Saskatchewan (MARS) is the first system to be developed for the on-line issuance of mineral dispositions (referred to as e-Tenure). Other systems will be developed in future years for oil and gas, potash, coal and quarry. There are a number of benefits to E-Tenure: lower costs for acquiring dispositions, no more ground-staking, easier access to dispositioning information, web-based delivery, improved functionality, online interest registration and ownership transfers, quicker turnaround for the issuance of dispositions (days rather than weeks or months), more flexible payment options, government-wide data integration, and the ability to leverage existing data sources from within ISC, the Ministry of Environment, and others via the GeoPortal.

3. Reduce Administrative and Paperwork Burden

The **Ministry of Energy and Resources** has embarked on a major initiative to update and enhance business processes that support the oil and gas activities in the province for both government and industry, and exploit recent advances in technology. The Oil and Gas Renewal project will directly advance the key government priority of jobs and economic growth by substantially decreasing industry costs for filing and obtaining data while increasing the industry's access to information for future development plans, thereby increasing the competitiveness of the province compared to other jurisdictions.

The **Ministry of Justice** has improved client service and reduced paperwork burden by streamlining the processes in the Annual Return Unit of the Corporations Branch. In certain situations, the process of having to formally request, in writing, has been eliminated. Increased efficiencies have decreased turnaround times in processing annual returns and financial statements.

Information Services Corporation implemented a number of fee changes including a reduction in transfer to surviving joint tenant transaction fees from 15 per cent to a flat fee of \$12.50; this reduced fees by 50 per cent for title transmissions.

The **Ministry of Justice** introduced amendments to *The Residential Tenancies Act* and consequential amendments to *The Saskatchewan Assistance Act*, which allowed for the streamlining of administrative processes and paperwork requirements and expedited the administering of payments of security deposit guarantees to residential landlords by the Ministry of Social Services. The landlord now completes a simplified notice which is reviewed by the Office of Residential Tenancies (ORT). The ORT then advances the notice to Social Services for

client notification and payment of the guarantee to the landlord. Social Services clients continue to have the right to a hearing through the ORT if they dispute the landlord's claim.

The **Ministry of Social Services**, in April 2009, began offering multi-year contracts to community-based organizations (CBOs) with the aim of providing a more stable funding option to CBOs while ensuring that the accountability and administration for the contracts remain intact. In 2009, 14 CBOs and three mobile crisis services across the province accepted three-year contracts to provide a total of 38 programs and services to Saskatchewan citizens. It is projected that all qualifying agencies will be offered multi-year contracts by the year 2011-2012.

4. Adopt modernized regulatory and compliance alternatives

The **Ministry of Environment** is engaged in an initiative designed to revise the province's environmental legislative and regulatory framework. The revisions underway will increase the tools available to encourage compliance while emphasizing improved environmental performance and outcomes. This will make it easier for businesses to implement innovations and best practices in order to achieve high standards that will continue to protect human health and the environment.

5. Reduce Regulatory Overlap, Duplication and Redundancies

In May 2009, the **Ministry of Health** introduced *The Food Safety Regulations* which apply to public eating establishments as well as food processing facilities. This new package of regulations updated food safety requirements to bring them in line with current scientific research related to food safety. This has resulted in the consolidation of regulatory requirements for public eating establishments and food processing facilities. As a result *The Public Eating Establishment Regulations*, *The Bakeshop Regulations, 1986* and food safety provisions found in *The Sanitation Regulations* were all repealed.

The **Ministry of Agriculture** is currently working toward repealing the *Saskatchewan Hatchery Regulations* and the *Saskatchewan Poultry Regulations*. These regulations are being repealed as they almost completely duplicate existing Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regulations. With the repeal of these two regulations the poultry industry will no longer be required to apply annually for licenses as they are required to today.

The **Ministry of Energy and Resources (ER)** joined the Petroleum Registry of Alberta in order to provide industry and government in Saskatchewan with access to a safe, reliable, world class system for the submission and collection of infrastructure, volumetric, and allocation information for all Saskatchewan properties. Aligning ER's processes with the Registry demonstrates true pan-western co-operation by leveraging an existing solution that has earned a very high degree of industry support. The collaborative relationship that ER is building with the Government of Alberta provides opportunity for further standardization and development of cost-effective joint approaches in the future.

6. Build Regulatory Capacity Within Government

Enterprise Saskatchewan hosted a regulatory modernization conference October 21 and 22, 2009 to increase the capacity of regulators to implement and administer regulations in more effective ways with reduced burden on business, while continuing to protect public health, safety, workers, and the environment.

In January 2009, **Enterprise Saskatchewan** undertook an in-depth regulatory barriers survey of the members of the 18 sector teams and three issues councils. The aim of the survey was to identify regulatory barriers or issues that were common to a number of economic sectors and to ensure that the Regulatory Modernization Council's workplan reflected the overall priorities of private sector businesses in Saskatchewan. By collecting, thoroughly analyzing, and sharing this information widely, Enterprise Saskatchewan has improved the clarity and communication of priorities related to the removal of regulatory barriers.

7. Enhance Regulatory Transparency and Accountability

Enterprise Saskatchewan is currently developing a one-stop website for stakeholder consultations on new and amended regulations. The website will provide people with an opportunity to have input on new or revised regulations.

Every two years the **Ministry of Finance** conducts a survey of businesses that collect taxes. The 2008 survey showed 91 per cent satisfaction with the Ministry's quality of service, compared to 89 per cent in 2006. Finance will survey again in 2010.

In May 2009, the **Ministry of Health** introduced a Restaurant Inspection Report website which enables the general public to access recent public health inspector report information on restaurants in Saskatchewan.

To improve upon stakeholder consultation, in 2010 the **Ministry of Health** will post on its website all proposed standards, guidelines and best management practices that relate to public health regulations.