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April 13, 2017

The Heavy News Weekly

INSIDE

Pallister government sets course for ``responsible recovery"

Core infrastructure investment to rise slightly in 2017-18

There were no big surprises in the Pallister government's budget, released Tuesday. And the response, generally, has been that it was a moderate, middle-of-the-road blueprint for spending in 2017-18.

"We were glad to see that the provincial government has held to its pledge to keep core infrastructure investment at more than $1 billion," MHCA President Chris Lorenc said.

"We will work within the government's promise to invest at least $500 million annually in the highways capital budget," Lorenc said.

"But we also sent the government the message that this investment needs to be protected against inflation, annually, with incremental increases to that budget line."

The Pallister government has set aside $1.117 billion for core infrastructure investment, composed of $747 million for roads, highways, bridges and flood protection and up to $370 million for municipal, local and "other" provincial infrastructure. This compares to 2016-17's expenditures, currently forecasted to come in at $1.087 billion, according to the budget.

"Investments in strategic capital stimulate the provincial economy, generate employment and increase household and business incomes," Budget 2017 papers note. "It is important that the investment decisions are made in the context of stimulating the economy, are for the public good, but are also financially sustainable over the long-term."

Budget 2017 is being called "Responsible Recovery" – dove-tailing from 2016's spending plan, which was dubbed "Correcting the Course." It shows progress on priorities that have led the province's spending and fiscal strategies, including reducing the annual deficit and curbing the growth in expenditures, year over year.

The reaction to the budget was fairly muted, with many observers noting it took a middle-of-the-road approach. It is a document of restraint, not austerity. Manitobans, however, are still waiting to see the full effect of changes to the health system, including the shuttering of ERs, and the effect of capping public service costs.

Unlike in Saskatchewan, where the recent budget announcement contained tax increases, the Pallister government's budget instead sought to leave taxes alone, while making some changes to tax credits and rebates.

Continued on page 2

Responsible recovery cont'd.

"Some of our provincial neighbours are pursuing different paths involving stark decisions," Friesen said. Manitoba intends to get the province on the road to economic recovery without drastic action, aiming still to see it recognized as the "most improved province."

Highlights of Budget 2017:

- Projected summary deficit of $840 million; down from $872 million forecast for 2016-17
- Projected core (departmental) deficit of $779 million; down from $800-million '16-17 forecast
- Tax freeze, with increase to basic personal exemption and tax brackets, to keep pace with inflation
- Highways capital investment at $502 million, as committed to in November 2016, down from 2016-17's budgeted $540 million
- Water-related infrastructure budget rises to $60 million, up from 2016-17's $45 million
- Health and education budgets are held to tight increases, of 1.8% and 1.3% respectively, compared to the 2016-17 budget. Family services sees a 5.4% increase
- Total expenditures: $13.8 billion, up 2.7% compared to new forecast for 2016-17
- Total revenue: $13 billion
- Projected individual income tax is driving Manitoba's own-source revenue growth
- No release as yet on what is the level 2017-18 in the Building Manitoba Fund, which was set at $284 million last year
- No detail or discussion of the financial and economic impact of a carbon tax/pricing, to be introduced in 2018
- Manitoba's GDP is expected to grow by 2% this year, in line with Canada's GDP growth

The importance of trade and transportation to the Manitoba economy was noted within the budget papers. Recent years have seen slower annual growth in international exports from the province. From 2007 to '16, the share of international exports to real GDP in Manitoba fell from 33% to 27%. The share of interprovincial exports remained relatively stable, declining from 29% to 27%. Manitoba's exports are predicted to rise in 2017, based on stronger economies in Canada and the U.S., and a depreciated Canadian dollar.

The budget papers also contained some detail out of the government's "Fiscal Performance Review." It noted that modernization of procurement across government was one of 11 key areas of cost-saving opportunities for the province.

Gillingham meets to discuss procurement, budgets

$9.5 million budget shortfall will not mean a reduction to the 2017 streets program

City of Winnipeg Finance Chairman Scott Gillingham has expressed his support to see more work on regional and local street renewal get started earlier in the construction season.

Gillingham met with MHCA past-chair Henry Borger, chairman of the association's Winnipeg Committee, MHCA President Chris Lorenc and MHCA Policy Analyst Catherine Mitchell April 6, as part of his consultations heading into the drafting of the 2018 operating and capital budgets.

He had asked the MHCA to speak to the budget process, the way the city procures its annual infrastructure works and its strategy for local and regional street renewal.

"We have to manage our expenses on all fronts," Coun. Gillingham said. "But we have to make strategic investments; we can't just stop."

The councilor agreed that city council can continue to make headway on improving procurement, and accelerating the tender and awards schedule each year, such that shovels get in the ground earlier to make fuller use of the construction season available.

The MHCA and Gillingham agreed that the higher levels of government, with greater revenue capacity, should step up to take a greater and "fairer" share of the cost. Further, a new fiscal deal, which extends to municipalities the ability to draw revenues from growth taxes, for example, is required out of the provincial government.

The meeting came on the heels of a commitment by Gillingham that the projected $9.5-million shortfall in the 2017 year will not mean a reduction to the 2017 local and regional street renewal program funding.

Borger and Lorenc spoke to the need to see infrastructure works roll out in a more coordinated fashion, such that connected street or underground works are part of larger, coordinated project. This would allow for savings in time and cost of mobilization (set up, tear down) and reduces the disruption to the community.

Coun. Gillingham was counselled that regional projects not be packaged in overly large, multi-disciplinary and complicated contracts. Not only does this reduce the number of local firms that can compete in such a bid, it heightens the risk of any delay – from project operations, change orders or disputes – disrupting and delaying the whole project. Better, to break up very large projects into multiple contracts that can draw numerous, competitive bids and proceed in an orderly way. The Kenaston Underpass project was cited as a good example.

Gillingham stressed that the city has committed to rolling surpluses from any year of a capital budget into the next year, halting past practices of using such funds to cover operating costs in other program areas.

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Number of Tickets: _____ Contact Person: _____

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Signature: _____

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ph: 204-947-1379 or fax: 204-943-2279

As per MHCA board policy, only registrations cancelled up to five business days prior to the commencement of this event will be refunded.

Aggregate committee drafts resolution for review of pit/ quarry levies

Andre Gamby, David Shume, Real Pelletier, and Colleen Munro

Consistent with a long-standing MHCA approach, the association's Aggregate Committee has drafted a proposal to be presented to the RM of Rockwood Aggregate Task Force concerning two key policy priorities.

The proposal is for approval of a resolution that asks the Manitoba government to strike a municipal, provincial and industry task force to review the quarry rehabilitation levy program. It would also look at updating and introducing a 2013 proposal for a new Community Enhancement Levy, which would boost revenues returned to communities that host pits and quarries.

The resolution, if supported by the RM's aggregate task force, would then go to the Rockwood municipal council for consideration.

"The MHCA's Aggregate Committee believes it is just fairer to communities that support development of aggregate resources that they see a more meaningful return on their investments – the Community Enhancement Levy, first approved in 2013 in draft form, would do that," said committee Chair James Kaskiw.

"But we don't want to proceed with the CEL concept without a broader review of the fees and levies currently paid by producers. We think there can be better coordination of these programs, to everyone's benefit."

The committee, which met on April 5, also heard an update on the RM of Springfield's task force. It was decided that the MHCA should seek input from aggregate-producer members on Springfield's new development plans. The comments will be submitted to MMM Group, which is developing the consultations and report. The report is to be in the hands of the municipality council this fall.

The draft resolution, meanwhile, will also be presented to the RM of Springfield. MHCA continues to meet with council officials there on the need to protect access to, and see efficient approvals of permits for, pits and quarries in that jurisdiction.

The resolution seeks a review of the amount, purpose and various uses of the provincial rehab levy, the revenues of which are distributed when pits and quarries are exhausted and require rehabilitation to a state for the use of residents. The review would be conducted by a task force composed of representatives from the provincial government, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the relevant rural municipalities and the MHCA.

In addition to this levy, producers are charged licence and transportation fees.

The proposed Community Enhancement Levy would combine and enhance these levies. It would more directly benefit communities hosting pits and quarries, and used for specific purposes such as rehabilitating and landscaping retired pits, improving municipal infrastructure and developing recreation, community and business/industrial parks.

The MHCA is continuing to press the provincial government to clarify the authority of provincial statutes that protect access to aggregate resources, over the authority of municipalities, some of which are proposing bylaws that would limit development of and access to pits and quarries.

AON
Event Sponor

Breakfast with the Minister of Infrastructure

The MHCA is hosting a 'Breakfast with the Minister of Infrastructure', the Hon. Blaine Pedersen on April 24, 2017 and MHCA members are invited to attend.

This is an opportunity to hear the minister speak overall to the 2017-18 provincial budget tabled in the legislature on April 11, and in particular what it commits to the Manitoba Infrastructure highways capital program.

The Pallister government has committed to investing at least $1 billion annually in core infrastructure, and no less than $500 million annually in the highways capital budget. The MHCA has asked for confirmation that 'core' infrastructure continues to be defined as highways, bridges, flood protection, municipal roads, water and sewer, and strategic transportation infrastructure.

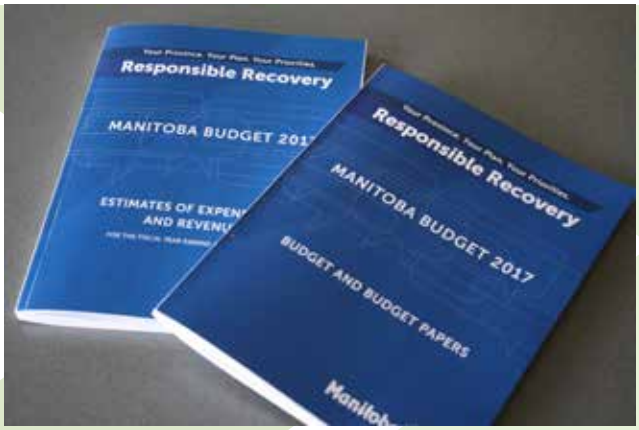
This is your chance to hear from and speak directly to Minister Pedersen, to talk about the challenges facing industry, your business in 2017, and the foreseeable future.

When: April 24
Where: Ellice Room
Holiday Inn Winnipeg Airport Polo Park
1740 Ellice Avenue
Cost: $30 + gst / person
– includes a hot breakfast

Agenda:
7:30am – doors open
8:00am – welcome and breakfast is served
8:20am – Minister Pedersen's presentation followed by Q & A

To register, please contact MHCA Operations Manager Christine Miller, by email christine@mhca.mb.ca or by phone 204.947.1379

Pallister government can be judged by economic progress: Friesen



Finance Minister Cameron Friesen set the bar a little higher for his government, which he said should be measured against its successes in growing the economy.

Friesen, speaking to a sold-out crowd at the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce breakfast Wednesday, said the Pallister government has made progress on reducing the provincial deficit and containing rising expenditures.
But Budget 2017 should be seen as a signal that from this point on, the government should be judged not just by its fiscal performance, but by GDP growth, for example. The finance minister released the new budget in the legislature Tuesday.

The highlights include a smaller projected summary deficit this year, at $840 million, compared to the forecast of $872 million in 2016-17. The core government deficit, reflecting the operations of its departments, is budgeted to come in at $779 million this year, down by about $20 million.

"We believe the approach we're taking is moderate, and a balanced one," he said, noting the Progressive Conservatives inherited a "legacy of spending" from the former NDP administration.

"We're changing the culture, we are changing the operations of government."

Friesen said budget consultations – and the hard realities of rising debt-servicing costs – told his government that it could not tinker, or trim at the edges. He used the analogy of the shifting foundation of a house that causes doors to stick in their jambs. Homeowners know that you can only shave down the edges for so long; eventually you have to work on the house's structure.

Now that the trajectory of the spending increases has started to bend downward, however, the province will be known by how it moves the economy ahead. "We have to kick-start the economy."

Friesen also said strategic infrastructure decisions are key. A government performance review, details of which were included in the budget papers, found that better procurement across the government holds real potential for reducing costs, and getting better value out of expenditures.

Tendering processes can improve, Friesen acknowledged. He said improving tendering, as with getting Manitoba Infrastructure tenders out earlier, gives industry greater confidence.

MHCA President Chris Lorenc said this week's budget, dubbed "Responsible Recovery," can be regarded as a baseline from which to measure the government's progress on its infrastructure investment and economic performance.

The $502-million investment in Manitoba Infrastructure's highways capital budget will have to be increased incrementally in each year from here on, to protect it against inflation.
Lorenc also called upon the province to release publicly a valuation of the provincial "infrastructure investment deficit" – the level of investment required to improve the condition of roads, highways and flood protection assets, and to construct new infrastructure required for a growing economy and population.

Millennials on the march!

Peter G Hall, Vice President and Chief Economist

Scan our forecasts over recent years, and you can easily find one glaring, repeated error. Our US outlook has consistently foreseen a housing revival, and while we did accurately call the turning point, the levels have not failed to disappoint. That convincing surge, the hallmark of every US recovery, simply hasn't materialized. Is this just EDC Economics' version of Linus' Great Pumpkin, or is this event eventually going to show up?

Where did we go wrong? A key group of US consumers has been missing in action since the Great Recession. Unlike any recent post-recession period, droves of young workers have been sidelined, unable to fully or even partly integrate into the job market. Why should this really matter? After all, they're not the highest-net-worth consumers in any economy; surely they are not that important to the overall picture, especially given how top-heavy Western economies are with ageing and wealthy baby boomers? Maybe so; but what makes these younger age groups critical is that they are 'first-wave' consumers; they are buying their first cars, their first homes, forming households and having their first children, with all the specialized consumption those events entail. Take them out of the economy, and you lose a potent force that affects a whole chain of trans-generational economic activity.

How do we know that they are missing? Check out labour force participation, and it's immediately apparent that something went horribly wrong. US unemployment spiked with the onset of recession, surging from 5 per cent to 10 per cent between April 2008 and October 2009. But it began a steady recovery almost immediately, and is now back below 5 per cent. Normally, this increase in demand for workers would increase labour force participation. However, this time around, overall participation continued to tumble, and particularly so for younger workers. Take those in the 25-34 age category – they typically have high participation, but in the post-recession period, fully 3 per cent of this entire population slice dropped out of the labour force. That alone is 1.3 million American youth, potential consumers just sitting on the sidelines.

This is obvious in another disturbing statistic. Unable to find meaningful work, adult children are staying at home for longer and in record numbers. Among those 18-34 years of age, the percentage still living at home has been pretty steady over time, regardless of economic conditions. However, this time around, the number shot up to unseen levels: almost one-third of Americans in this age group are still parked at home. Some call this a change in preference, but history strongly suggests that it is directly related to the lack of economic opportunity.

That's why it is particularly remarkable that, after all these years, this story is doing a big U-turn. Since mid-2015, labour force participation of the 25-34 age group has regained 1.8 percentage points. That's almost 800,000 extra first-wave consumers that have entered the market in less than a year. Better still, the trend is pointing upward: overall employment growth is still hot, the official unemployment rate is ultra-low, and real wages are ticking up. Conditions seem ripe for continued re-absorption of this important class of workers and consumers.

Is the best of this growth now behind us? If participation rises to pre-recession levels, then there are about another half-million millennials on the way in to the job market. At current absorption rates, that gives the US market less than a year of growth. But with the ageing of the population, who's to say that that's where it ends? We could actually see higher-than-average participation for some time, which would mark a radical departure from the gloomy future most have forecast for the young set.

Has the wave of consumption and home-buying begun? Demand is picking up, but the best is yet to come. It will come with a lag: millennials will have to get used to this new money coming in, they'll be retiring student debt, dealing with housing costs, relocation and the like. But they'll also have help from ever-wealthier parents, eager to see them progress- finally.

The bottom line? Parents of America, you are about to get your basement back. And in the process, you are likely to see an economy that finally gains lift on a broader front, a new wave of growth that still has a few years behind it.

Economic experts tout infrastructure but cite challenges

Warren Frey, Daily Commercial News, April 5

EDC Economics economist Todd Evans, ConstructConnect Canada president Mark Casaletto and BuildForce Canada economist Bob Collins gave their take to delegates at the Canadian Construction Association's (CCA) International and Construction Economic Situation and Outlook session at the CCA's annual conference held in Mexico recently.

A dominant theme of the conversation was the emergence of non-residential construction as a strong driver of the economy, particularly civil construction.

"This year, we're forecasting a big jump," Casaletto said, citing total construction starts for 2017 expected to grow by 13.4 per cent, total civil engineering starts for 2017 forecast for 21.5 per cent growth and total non-residential expected to jump 17 per cent. "These are huge numbers, but I want to put an asterisk next to it," Casaletto said, explaining that while huge and long-term commitments to infrastructure are being made, activity is not starting as fast as it could.

Megaprojects have become a touchstone of the industry, he said, and between 2011 and 2014 average announcements for multi-billion projects skyrocketed, but in 2015 they cratered. The numbers for 2016 are above average due to big infrastructure commitments, but "it's a bit of a pig in a python" as progress on these projects is slow.

Casaletto noted that the time may be near for talk of "teraprojects" and said willingness to speculate and investment confidence will have a significant impact in the next 24 months.

"There is over a trillion dollars in private money waiting to be invested and overall confidence will determine if that money moves into construction," Casaletto said.

While infrastructure spending varies across the country, British Columbia "really is the story of the country and has been for some time," he added.

A province's ability to commit to infrastructure depends on a balanced budget and only B.C. and Nova Scotia are in prime positions to take advantage, Casaletto said.

He also noted that demographics, increased urbanization and the tendency of new immigrants to settle in major cities means there will be strain on current and aging infrastructure.

"The private sector will have a big part in infrastructure long term, because demographics will play a larger role," he said.

Collins agreed that demographics are a prime mover for the economy and said Canada faces long-term challenges such as slower population growth leading to less of a labour pool for construction, competition from other industries for those workers and a wave of retirements.

"Twenty per cent of the work force is expected to retire in the next decade, an estimated 248,000 construction workers," Collins said.

He noted that labour markets vary by region, with Ontario and British Columbia leading.

"Ontario is 'the beast.' There's a lot of work in the Greater Toronto Area, but it takes a lot to move markets in Ontario due to its population size," Collins said.

British Columbia has major LNG, pipelines, utilities, mining, transportation and other infrastructure, but Collins cautioned these projects will peak by 2019.

In Alberta there are still projects being maintained, which lessens turnover. But there is very little new capital investment in the oil and gas sector and much of the labour that will be or has been released is from out of province,

"But soon the downturn will affect numbers in house," Collins said.

Evans took a more global view and said the recent trade agreement between Canada and Europe shows promise, though Brexit is cause for concern. China is another area with potential, Evans said, since it has shifted to a more domestically driven economy, presenting opportunities for Canadian exporters.

"Seeing what's happened with China, we should keep an eye on India, as they are going down the same path," Evans said.

Ethics - foundational to company culture

WORKSAFELY™ Back to You with Don Hurst

EXPO South 2017 showcased WORKSAFELY's ™ first delivery of the Canadian Construction Association's ethics course. Peter Paulic from Smook Contractors, also a member of MHCA's Board, took the lead in the delivery, offering participants a first-hand glimpse of how everything an owner does must be done ethically.

Paulic explained that ethical behaviour is paramount in the heavy construction industry. He believes that by maintaining high ethical standards, and being consistent in these practices, we thrive both personally and professionally.

The participants were asked to complete an online portion of the ethics course before they came to class. This allowed them to have a better understanding of what would be covered in the classroom, which then allowed additional time for collaborative learning.

Greg Orbanski, also a business owner and the MHCA's Board Chair, attended the training session and contributed valuable insight to the discussion. It was interesting to see how engaged the class participants were, each sharing their own personal moments in which they made conscious decisions to 'do the right thing'. The students then discussed how ethics were incorporated into the thought process when dealing with these real-life scenarios.

Effective January 2017, the CCA's ethics course has been mandated by Gold Seal as an education requirement for anyone taking their Gold Seal exam, as of April 2017. Ethics is an important foundation for any company's culture, regardless of any professional certification consideration. For more information on the Construction Industry Ethics course please contact MHCA education advisor Jackie Jones at 204-947-1379.

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3-1680 Ellice Ave.

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17-18	**COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
19	**COR™ Principles of Health and Safety Management**
20-21	**COR™ Auditor**
24	Train the Trainer
25	Auditor Refresher 1/2 day PM (no charge)

MAY 2017

3	Prime Contractor 1/2 day AM
9	Flagperson 1/2 day AM
9	Committee Representative Training 1/2 day PM
10-11	Traffic Control Coordinator
12	Excavation and Trenching 1/2 day AM
12	Auditor Refresher 1/2 day PM (no charge)
15-16	**COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
17	**COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
18-19	**COR™ Auditor**
30	Train the Trainer

JUNE 2017

9	Transportation of Dangerous Goods 1/2 day AM
12	Flagperson 1/2 day AM
12	Committee Representative Training 1/2 day PM
13-14	Traffic Control Coordinator
15	Excavation and Trenching 1/2 day AM
15	Auditor Refresher 1/2 day PM (no charge)
19-20	**COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
21	**COR™ Principles of Health and Safety Excellence**
22-23	**COR™ Auditor**
27	Train the Trainer

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WORKSAFELY MHCA

SAFETY TALK

Head Protection

The hard hat is one of the oldest, most widely used and important pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) on the job. However, the hard hat is not able to do its job when it is not properly worn, maintained, and replaced when needed.

Explain dangers

Head protection must be worn if any of the following apply:

- Danger of objects falling from above
- Possibility of accidental head contact with electrical hazards
- Chance of head bumping against fixed objects

Identify controls

To get the proper protection from your hard hat please follow these key points:

- Use the correct type of hard hat for the job. The hard hat should be labeled with the CSA or ANSI **Type** and **Class** of protection
- Approved hard hats protect against impact and penetration. **Type I** hard hats protect only the top of the head; **Type II** hard hats protect both the top and sides of the head
- A **Class E** hard hat is required for construction and utility projects. It provides electrical protection up to 20,000 volts

Proper care and wear:

- Inspect your hard hat every day before you use it. When you see holes, cracks, tears or other damage – replace it!
- Always keep your hard hat properly adjusted
- A hard hat should normally be worn facing forward
- Only wear products, such as winter liners and sunshades that are designed to specifically work in conjunction with hard hats
- Never drill holes or paint a hard hat

Demonstrate

As a crew, inspect your hard hats.

- Check the shell for cracks, dents, deep cuts or gouges
- Check the suspension for cracks or tears. Make sure the straps are not twisted, cut or frayed
- Remove the hard hat from service immediately if any signs of damage are found

Print and review this talk with your staff, sign off and file for COR™ / SECOR audit purposes.

Date: _____

Performed by: _____

Supervisor: _____

Location: _____

Concerns:

_____

_____

_____

Corrective Actions:

_____

_____

_____

Employee Name:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Employee Signature:

_____

_____

_____

_____

missed.

Day of Mourning

On April 28th, let us remember those killed or injured at work

SAFE WORK MANITOBA