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Backgrounder for News Release Provincial Auditor's 2015 Report – Volume 2

Social Media

Tourism Saskatchewan – Managing the Use of Social Media (Chapter 41)

Social media is an increasingly popular way for governments to engage with the public; however, it brings with it inherent risks. Typical concerns with social media include a loss of control over content, reputational risks from poor or inaccurate content, and a means for individuals to criticize the organization. Tourism Saskatchewan uses social media to market Saskatchewan as a tourism destination. Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson reports that Tourism Saskatchewan needs to formalize several of its processes to decrease the possibility of inappropriate content on its social media channels (e.g., Facebook). Specifically, it needs a formal social media strategy, comprehensive social media policies, and terms of use posted on its social media channels.

Health and Safety

St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 – Promoting Good Student Health and Physical Fitness (Chapter 40)

Research has shown that students who are physically active and properly nourished are better learners. Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson looked at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division's processes to promote good student health and physical fitness. She found that while it had many good processes, the Division needs to make improvements in a few key areas. For example, she notes that it needs to set and communicate its expectations for promoting student physical activity. In addition, it needs to give principals criteria to guide their decisions on student health and physical fitness initiatives within schools (including partnerships with private sector or not-for-profit corporations), and report to its Board on the performance of those initiatives. These steps will help it determine whether its efforts are making a difference in improving the health and fitness of students.

Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure – Addressing Road Safety Concerns on Saskatchewan Highways (Chapter 35)

Addressing road safety concerns is critical to keeping the driving public safe. Saskatchewan has one of the highest fatality rates from vehicle collisions in Canada. For 93% of collisions, human factors are either the primary or contributing cause; for 34%, roadway factors are thought to play a role. The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure has a systematic process to track most road-safety concerns, develop projects to address these concerns, and prioritize the importance of these projects. However, of the 15 projects selected for the Ministry's 2015-16 annual work plan, the Auditor found that six projects had lower priority scores than 53 other projects, and 5 projects were not in its tracking system. Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson notes the Ministry needs to set clear criteria for selecting safety improvement projects, and require staff to document its analysis and rationale for selecting projects. Only then can show it focuses its efforts on projects that address the most serious safety concerns. Also, the Ministry needs periodic reports on what its road safety improvement program has achieved.



Unsupported Critical IT Systems

Ministry of Advanced Education – Managing Risks to Service Delivery from Unsupported Critical IT Systems (Chapter 32)

Some government agencies keep their information technology (IT) systems longer than vendors are willing to provide patches to fix known security problems or vulnerabilities; these systems are commonly referred to as “unsupported IT systems”. Unsupported IT systems are at greater risk of cybersecurity or data breaches and of not being available when needed. The Ministry of Advanced Education and several other government agencies rely on an unsupported IT system called the *One Client Service Model* (OCSM) system to deliver services to post-secondary students. Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson notes the Ministry needs complete and accurate cost and operational information so it can better address current gaps in the OCSM system’s functionality and performance. In addition, the Ministry of Advanced Education needs to clarify roles and responsibilities with the Ministry of Central Services for upgrading and patching the OCSM system, and paying for associated costs.

Buying Goods and Services

3sHealth – Shared Procurement (Chapter 34)

3sHealth facilitates volume-based and standardized purchases of goods and services on behalf of Saskatchewan’s 12 regional health authorities and their affiliates, and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. In 2014-15, these agencies bought \$221 million of goods and services through 3sHealth. Procuring goods and services for best value can present significant risks if not done in a fair and transparent manner. Poor quality of procured goods and services could also result in harm to those who use the province’s healthcare services. In her *2015 Report – Volume 2*, Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson recommends that 3sHealth obtain the Board’s approval for its procurement policies, document its procurement method selection decisions, and validate the reasonableness of inflationary-price-growth rates used to estimate cost savings from shared procurements. She also recommends that 3sHealth develop a process to confirm that member agencies’ and the national group purchasing organization’s staff involved in shared procurement activities regularly sign conflict-of-interest declarations. In addition, 3sHealth must periodically determine whether purchasing processes of the national group purchasing organization align with 3sHealth’s procurement policies, and actively monitor the performance of its shared-procurement suppliers.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic – Procuring Goods and Services (Chapter 38)

Using effective processes to procure goods and services helps ensure public sector agencies make purchase decisions in an open and transparent manner, and use resources wisely. Saskatchewan Polytechnic has spent almost \$70 million in each of the last few years to buy goods and services. Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson recommends that Sask Polytech update its procurement policy so that the policy applies to all of its purchases, and have its Board review and approve the policy. In addition, it must consistently document the basis for key decisions regarding tenders and for using single- or sole-source procurement methods, better enforce compliance with its procurement policy, and give the Board periodic reports on significant procurement activities.



For More Information

The full Provincial Auditor's *2015 Report – Volume 2*, which includes details on all of the Provincial Auditor's recommendations, is available online at www.auditor.sk.ca.

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