



## **Auditor: Better processes needed for school facilities maintenance and preventing aquatic invasive species**

**REGINA, Sask., June 7, 2016** – Prairie Spirit School Division No. 206 (Prairie Spirit) needs more formalized plans and processes to maintain its schools and keep better documentation, says Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson in her *2016 Report – Volume 1*, tabled today. In her Report, Ferguson notes that Prairie Spirit lacks an overall maintenance plan that identifies its objectives, strategies, and priorities over the short, medium, and long term.

Prairie Spirit currently focuses on short-term maintenance and repairs related to health and safety concerns. For example, it promptly addressed a service request indicating a natural gas smell in a school. Prairie Spirit has identified structural problems in over one-third of its 35 schools with estimated repair costs of over \$20 million. The Provincial Auditor recommends Prairie Spirit develop a written maintenance plan for all of its facilities that defines the level of maintenance needed, when to do the maintenance, and the cost over the short, medium, and long term. “Having a documented plan designed to address maintenance priorities over more than the short term is critical so that the right maintenance is done at the right time,” says Ferguson. “Such a plan would reduce the need for, and cost of, major repairs to Prairie Spirit’s facilities in the future.”

Prairie Spirit also needs to keep complete, accurate, and centralized information about its facilities’ significant components. For instance, Prairie Spirit was not tracking the condition of each of its facilities or the results of inspections of key components (e.g., air handling units). “Centralized tracking of the condition of facilities and maintenance for the 35 schools located throughout the division would facilitate planning and help to ensure efficient use of resources and staff time,” says Ferguson.

The Provincial Auditor also looked at the risk of introduction of aquatic invasive species into Saskatchewan. The risk is extremely high because zebra mussels exist in Manitoba. Once established, controlling and eradicating invasive species is difficult and expensive. The Provincial Auditor found the Ministry of Environment had generally effective processes for preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species in the province noting certain areas for improvement.

In her Report, the Provincial Auditor states that Environment needs to collaborate with partners (such as the Water Security Agency) to develop a long-term, multi-agency aquatic invasive species strategy. Such a strategy would help ensure prevention and monitoring activities are risk-based, sufficient, and sustainable. In addition, Environment must determine whether its public education and awareness campaigns work, and complete and test a rapid response plan. Ferguson notes, “A formal risk-based strategy is essential in detecting aquatic invasive species before they become established and cause damage to our water infrastructure or environment.”

Additional issues highlighted in the Provincial Auditor’s Report include:

- › Leading the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime Initiative – Ministry of Justice
- › Delivering the Breast Cancer Screening Program – Saskatchewan Cancer Agency
- › Confirming Only Qualified Drivers Remain Licensed – Saskatchewan Government Insurance
- › Protecting Children in Care – Ministry of Social Services



- › Increasing the Percentage of Grade 3 Students Reading at Grade Level – North East School Division No. 200
- › Keeping Government IT Systems and Data Secure – Ministry of Central Services and Ministry of Social Services
- › Monitoring the Fuel Tax Exemption Program – Ministry of Finance

Further details regarding the key topics covered in Volume 1 of the 2016 Report can be found in the accompanying [Backgrounder](#). The full Provincial Auditor's 2016 Report – Volume 1 is available online at [www.auditor.sk.ca](http://www.auditor.sk.ca).

*The Provincial Auditor is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. The Office serves the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan by providing independent assurance and advice on the management, governance, and effective use of public resources.*

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