



Museums Association of Saskatchewan

## ***Call for Advocacy Action Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation Funding***

*This is the second in an on-going series of advocacy bulletins issued by the Museums Association of Saskatchewan. For further information or assistance on any heritage advocacy issue, please contact: Wendy Fitch, Director of Museum Development, Museums Association of Saskatchewan, 424 McDonald Street, Regina, SK S4N 6E1 Tel: (306) 780-9280 or toll-free in Saskatchewan 1-866-568-7386. Email: [wendy.fitch@saskmuseums.org](mailto:wendy.fitch@saskmuseums.org)*

### **The Issue**

**The museum community needs to make sure that government decision-makers are aware of the important role that the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation (SHF) plays in sustaining and developing communities in Saskatchewan through its grants for heritage conservation, research, promotions and publications.**

As you read this, the Government of Saskatchewan is in the final stages of the provincial budget process, where the hard decisions about general revenue fund allocations are made. It's important that the decision-makers hear from you, to ensure that the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is given special consideration as an important public tool for building and sustaining our communities.

As the funding challenges faced by the SHF continue to hamper its ability to fulfil its mandate, **MAS calls on its members and supporters to write to their local politicians and MLAs and let them know that you strongly support the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation.**

If you value what heritage means to the quality of life and economic well-being of your community, please let your local MLA, the Minister, and the Premier know how you feel. Background information, ways of getting involved, and tools to help you take action are provided on the following pages.

### **The Background**

As the principal mechanism for the disbursement of heritage funding in the province for almost two decades, the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation has a long history of doing good work with minimal funding. It has undertaken initiatives such as these:

- ✚ helped fund the preservation of heritage structures, such as the grain elevator in Fleming and the blacksmith shop in Mossbank;
- ✚ assisted the Saskatchewan Youth Heritage Fairs' encouragement of future generations to accept heritage as a vital component in the quality of life;

- ✚ communicated our province's unique history and culture through various kinds of publications; and
- ✚ provided supplementary funding to help unearth and preserve our shared pre-contact history.

The efforts of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation have been felt by many of us in some fashion, though we may not be aware of it.

And although the work of the Foundation has greatly assisted many individuals, organizations and communities in this province, its annual funding allocation in the past decade has steadily decreased as the need for attention to our heritage legacy has increased. Meanwhile, the true value of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation grants has greatly eroded over the past 19 years due to increased costs and inflation.

The SHF has over the past decade had, on average, \$310,000 per year to allocate through its various grant programs, from a high of \$345,000 in 2003/04 to a low of \$275,000 in 2007/08. The 2009/10 grant allocation budget has been set at \$289,000 which represents a reduction of 16% between 2003 and 2009.

At the same time, the average number of requests has fluctuated between a low of 66 to a high of 99, with the average over the last decade being 85. Twenty per cent (20%) of those requests have not been funded. The SHF has tried to meet increased demand for eligible projects by making the individual grants smaller and smaller - in other words, cutting a small pie even into even smaller pieces. As a result, not only are an insufficient number of eligible projects being funded, those that do get funding are underfunded. In the absence of significant additional funds soon, the SHF will have to consider other options to ensure the project viability of submitted proposals.

## The Advocacy Campaign

If you wish to take part in this advocacy campaign, please send a note or email to your local MLA and copy your message to the Honourable Dustin Duncan, Minister responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport; and to Premier Brad Wall. Their contact information is:

Honourable Dustin Duncan  
Minister's Office, Room 345  
Legislative Building - 2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, SK S4S 0B3  
E-mail: [minister.tpcs@gov.sk.ca](mailto:minister.tpcs@gov.sk.ca)

Honourable Brad Wall  
Premier's Office, Room 226  
Legislative Building - 2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, SK S4S 0B3  
E-mail: [premier@gov.sk.ca](mailto:premier@gov.sk.ca)

You can find contact information for all Members of the Legislative Assembly at:  
[http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/members/mla\\_list.htm](http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/members/mla_list.htm)

The following are some issues/points you may want to highlight in your communication:

- ✚ *“The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is important in supporting the retention of our valuable heritage legacy, and as such, it is important to (my museum/myself), as a constituent, and to the whole of Saskatchewan.”*
- ✚ If you have received a grant from the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation in the past, you may wish to talk about your project and how the grant helped you in your goals, or how increased funding could help with further efforts on your project. If you know of a project that benefited from a Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation grant, you could talk about the importance of that project to your museum and your community.
- ✚ *“Currently, there is a wide discrepancy between the number of valuable heritage projects needing financial help and the amount of funding that the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation can allocate. This clearly demonstrates a need in Saskatchewan for greater support to the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, and as a result, greater support to heritage projects in our communities.”* If you have a project which would benefit from receiving a SHF grant but have hesitated about submitting an application because you are aware of the small amount of funding available, you could talk about the hardship this poses to your museum and your community.
- ✚ *“Saskatchewan benefits greatly from the economic value of heritage tourism that is supported through Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation grants, and could benefit even more so if grants were more widely available and if initiatives such as “Main Street” programs were available.”* “Main Street” programs concentrate on enhancing the natural and built heritage character of the trading areas of our communities and regions, and have been a major job creation initiative in the United States.
- ✚ *“Saskatchewan is famous for the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens. Part of what contributes to that quality of life, and what makes Saskatchewan communities strong, is being able to take pride in our past, our cultural heritage, and our beautiful natural environment. The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation supports work that preserves those legacies for the next generation. Therefore, we believe that the government should strongly consider increased support for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation in its deliberations over public spending.”*

Information summarized from material provided by Heritage Saskatchewan. <http://www.heritagesask.ca/>

For further information about the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, please visit its website at <http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/SHF>

**For Advocacy Tools (tips and examples) please see the next pages.**

**Please be sure to send MAS a copy of your advocacy letters so we can track our success!**

# The Advocacy Tools

## Advocacy Letter Tips

If you are planning to write a letter to deliver your message, be clear about why you are writing – to offer an opinion or require a response. It is also important to try and keep your letter to one page in length; a **sample advocacy letter** appears on the next page. A few key points to keep in mind while writing:

- a) Use a proper salutation.** A list of appropriate salutations is included below.
- b) State your purpose for writing and deliver your messages immediately in the lead paragraph.** Do not be afraid to put your request for action up front!
- c) Provide information about yourself.** Explain who you are and who you are representing.
- d) Make supporting arguments.** Make a few supporting arguments for your request (no more than three). Use statistics strategically, but sparingly. Provide evidence that others support your views.
- e) Make a request for action.** Be very specific about what you are asking the reader to do.
- f) Acknowledge your audience.** Thank your reader for taking the time to read your letter and show your appreciation for any past support. Offer to provide additional information or assistance in the future.
- g) Keep attachments short.** Supporting information can be attached, but should be kept short.

*(Excerpt from the Advocacy Tool Kit – Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, Jan/2008*  
<http://www.spra.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=798ee4a3-c87e-48db-8dd3-64ebf9e66ae0>)

## Proper Salutations

Address your audience appropriately and according to their proper title. The Forms of Address are listed below:

Premier: The Honourable Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan  
Letters to the Premier may begin with “Dear Premier”, “Dear Sir” or “Dear Mr. Wall.” (Avoid Mr. Premier)

Cabinet Minister: The Honourable Dustin Duncan, Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport  
Letters may begin “Dear Minister”, “Dear Sir”, or “Dear Mr. Duncan”.

Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Dwain Lingenfelter, Leader of the Opposition  
Letters begin with “Mr. Lingenfelter.”

Members of the Legislative Assembly: Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, M.L.A. for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Letters begin with “Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_.”

*(Summarized from the Office of the Provincial Secretary - Forms of Address. Retrieved December 21, 2007 from* <http://www.ops.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=d08d8bdf-dc96-445a-ba6a-b63770d8df89>)

## Sample Advocacy Letter

January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Honourable Dustin Duncan  
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture & Sport  
Room 345, Legislative Building  
2405 Legislative Drive  
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Dear Mr. Duncan,

The Museums Association of Saskatchewan (MAS) would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to ensure that the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is given special consideration as you and your cabinet colleagues determine how to allocate scarce resources in the upcoming budget. The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation (SHF) plays an important role in sustaining and developing communities in Saskatchewan, particularly through its program of grants for heritage restoration, conservation, research, promotion and interpretation.

The Museums Association of Saskatchewan is the non-profit organization representing the interests and concerns of the Saskatchewan museum community. Our membership, of over 200 institutions, includes community history museums, art galleries, historic sites, keeping houses, parks, conservation areas, and archives, as well as museum staff and volunteers.

Many of our members have been recipients of SHF grants in the past. In the past year alone several including the National Doukhobour Heritage Village, the SW Saskatchewan Oldtimers Museum and the Dunlop Art Gallery have all received assistance for preservation or promotion projects. MAS has also received assistance from the SHF in the past for projects promoting Saskatchewan heritage.

All of Saskatchewan benefits economically from the investment in heritage made by the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. Recent studies show that cultural tourism is the fastest growing tourism sector. As well, investment in an heritage project generally translates into money being spent at the local level. Unfortunately, there is a growing discrepancy between the number of projects needing assistance and the amount of money available for the SHF to allocate.

As the principal mechanism for disbursing broad heritage funding in the province, the SHF has contributed in many ways to the quality of life of Saskatchewan citizens. Being able to take pride in our past, our cultural heritage, and our amazing natural environment is what makes our communities strong. The SHF supports work that preserves and shares these legacies for current and future generations. Therefore we believe that the government should strongly consider increased support for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation in its deliberations over public spending.

I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter. If you have any questions, or are interested in discussing this issue further, please contact me at (306) 780-9280 or by email at [wendy.fitch@saskmuseums.org](mailto:wendy.fitch@saskmuseums.org).

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Fitch  
Director of Museum Development

Cc Celine Perillat, MAS President