

The Megaphone

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meg·a·phone [meg-uh-fohn] –noun

1. a cone-shaped device for magnifying or directing the voice, chiefly used in addressing a large audience out of doors or in calling to someone at a distance.

www.dictionary.com

Hello everyone!

In this week's *Megaphone*, we wanted to fill you in on all the happenings at Heritage Saskatchewan. It's one of the newest heritage organizations in our province, and one with a unique mandate.

Heritage Saskatchewan is having its inaugural Annual General Meeting and Forum in Saskatoon February 19 and 20. There are ways for all MAS members to participate, so we wanted to get this information out to you!

Ken Alecxe, CEO of Heritage Saskatchewan, recently participated in an email interview with me about the AGM and Forum, and about the organization itself. He explains Heritage Saskatchewan's unique role.

"Prior to the existence of Heritage Saskatchewan, a single vehicle did not exist that would bring together the heritage community of organizations and interested individuals who want to make a difference in securing our heritage legacy that is currently at risk," Ken wrote.

"Heritage Saskatchewan is a collective voice for all heritage organizations and activity in the province. It supports the work that all of them do, including the work done by the municipal heritage advisory committees and the related interpretive centres. It allows the heritage community in Saskatchewan to bring forward common issues that need to be urgently dealt with."

One of those issues is "chronic underfunding" of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, he says. It's the focus of Heritage Saskatchewan's first advocacy initiative.

"This initiative was recently launched to enlist the support of the heritage community in letting their elected provincial representatives know at this time, when decisions are being made on the provincial budget for 2010/2011, that funding for the work of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is critical to preserving, conserving and interpreting our heritage...our legacy," Ken wrote.

That's just one example of how members of the organization – such as MAS, which has recently joined Heritage Saskatchewan as an organizational member, and will be participating in the advocacy initiative – can work together as a collective voice for heritage.

There are many benefits for individual museums in joining as well, Ken says, and membership costs vary depending on the organization's budget. An individual membership is \$25, which provides the individual with a single vote. A non-profit association rate is 0.1% (1/1000th) of the previous year's operating budget, no less than \$50 and no greater than \$1000, and the non-profit is permitted between one and five voting delegates, depending

upon the level of the membership fee. An associate membership is available for government agencies and their employees at a flat rate of \$250, and they do not receive a vote.

It's important for individual museums to get involved, Ken says.

“Inclusivity is a key principle for Heritage Saskatchewan, and we are definitely interested in having the active participation of all of the individual museums in Saskatchewan. The greater the collective voice of the heritage community through Heritage Saskatchewan, the greater our collective impact will be on the heritage issues that concern all of us.”

As individual members, each museum would have at least one voting delegate at the Heritage Forum and AGM, and would have the opportunity to be involved in the province-wide working groups and discussions that will be initiated following the 2010 Forum, Ken says.

“It is critically important to have the full spectrum of issues and opportunities that are presented in every region of the province. Heritage Saskatchewan has to be about embracing all heritage in this province, and go beyond focusing on urban regions and institutions. Our rural and small town roots go deep in this province, and our First Nations and Métis Nations have even deeper roots.”

After the inaugural AGM, the working groups need to move forward immediately, he says. The newly elected Board of Directors will meet to review and further develop the annual Strategic Plan that will provide a basis for the direction of the working groups and the work of the staff at Heritage Saskatchewan for the next year. The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation advocacy initiative will be continued. Working agendas to identify and address key issues will be developed with key stakeholders in different levels of government, the tourism sector, developers, the education sector, and First Nations and Métis groups, among others.

“There is a lot of work to be done, and the more interest and activity we have at the local level, where the individual museums reside, the more we can elevate heritage in the minds of the public and decision-makers,” he says.

“We now have a vehicle to create greater understanding across the board in the form of Heritage Saskatchewan, and it will be effective if we use it -- if we all come to the table and participate in defining its direction and getting the job done.”

MAS will have delegates at the AGM and Forum, and we'll also be participating in the trade show – so if you decide to attend, drop by and see us! Thanks to Ken for the information, and good luck to everyone at Heritage Saskatchewan as you move forward – we'll look for an update as things progress!

-Lisa

How can you get involved with Heritage Saskatchewan?

Heritage Saskatchewan has a great website, with a lot of detailed information on the organization, its staff, its initiatives, and of course, its AGM and Forum February 19 and 20. You can access the website at this link <http://www.heritagesask.ca/>; email their office at info@heritagesask.ca; or at contact them at: #200-2020 11th Avenue Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0J3 Phone: (306) 780-9191 Fax: (306) 780-9190.