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## **SARM aims to attract the next generation to rural government**

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) has been the voice of rural Saskatchewan for over 100 years and has worked with generations of rural elected officials representing their member RMs. As more young families are calling rural Saskatchewan home, recruitment of the next generation is vital to maintaining a healthy rural municipal government. There are countless young people living in rural Saskatchewan who would be a valuable addition to RM councils, they just need to be encouraged to participate.

“We see many advantages to having diverse demographics among rural councils, particularly the younger generation just starting out. The future of Saskatchewan’s rural communities depends on young people stepping up to join municipal politics. SARM is starting the conversation with current members to identify ways we can ensure the next generation knows how to get involved, and knows how much we really need them. We want to plant the seed in RMs, encouraging those interested in having a say about their RM to step forward and consider a pathway in municipal politics,” says, Ray Orb, President of SARM.

SARM is calling for more young people to join rural municipal government to help shape the future for the next generation living in rural Saskatchewan. The need to attract young RM members is in the forefront of this conversation, and SARM is asking members to give thought to flexible council meeting times, developing a mentorship plan for new councillors, and perhaps even hosting an open house at the RM office to welcome those interested in local politics to come and learn more about it.

“I chose to be in municipal politics to get an understanding of how grassroots politics worked and try to have a positive impact for our rural community. I also wanted to advocate for positive change in rural Saskatchewan and for our future generations to keep rural communities growing and succeeding.” says Shawn Kramer, Councillor for the RM of Maple Creek. “Over my past two terms I have learned a lot about rural municipal procedures and governance, and also how to work with other communities and levels of government to work towards a common goal. There is always more to learn from past community leaders and the future leaders as well. I look forward to continue learning and working for our rural community in my third term.”

During SARM’s 118th Convention on March 15<sup>th</sup>, members will hear from current RM council members about bridging the aging demographic with SARM members and recruiting future diverse young leaders in rural Saskatchewan.

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**Background:** *SARM is the independent association that represents its membership of rural municipal government in Saskatchewan and is the principal advocate in representing them before senior governments.*

*SARM's 118th Annual Convention is March 14-16, 2023 at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. We invite provincial news agencies to join us as representatives from rural Saskatchewan municipalities converge to discuss, and debate timely topics, elect officials and hear the critical issues of Saskatchewan's rural members.*