

November 2000

Dear Heritage Colleague:

I am writing to inform you of the status of the Final Report of the Interim Heritage Council, "*A Vision for Saskatchewan's Heritage*". As you know, the report was received in late 1998 and was published and distributed in early 1999. Since then both government and the heritage community have had an opportunity to review the report.

The report is an excellent introduction to the broad spectrum of heritage activities in Saskatchewan, its challenges and its potential for further development. I commend the Interim Heritage Council for its efforts. I am impressed with the thoughtful response that the report has received from a variety of stakeholders and how heritage resources are valued and supported throughout the province.

The report will guide our work over the next few years. Many of the report's recommendations involve the implementation of new programs or require additional resources. These recommendations compete for attention and resources with other important government priorities.

Some departmental initiatives that are currently being undertaken and that relate to the recommendations in report include:


- An internal review of the government's heritage responsibilities, including the administrative structure of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, in order to provide appropriate resources and to clarify mandates.
- A four year Centenary Fund established by the province to allocate \$20 million over four years to upgrade heritage properties and parks.
- Investment of incremental funds and on-going work with partners of provincial-in-scope museums to stabilize those facilities.
- An inventory of aboriginal "Sites of A Special Nature" including monitoring threatened sites and developing a management policy for these sites.
- A new lottery agreement which became effective in April 2000 to ensure that lottery profits will continue to support existing sport, culture, heritage and recreation beneficiaries for another 3 years.

- Examination of heritage legislation with a view to providing more efficient administration, to strengthen community autonomy, to provide a more inclusive definition of heritage and to streamline legislative requirements.
- On-going computerization of heritage resource inventories and maps in order to lay the foundation for greater public access to information and "on-line" servicing.
- Redesign of the Provincial Heritage Property Program to enable the designation of a representative inventory of the province's significant historical buildings by 2005.
- Collaboration with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, including consultation with heritage stakeholders to develop a stewardship policy for the management of crown-owned heritage buildings.
- Initiation of a process to develop a provincial culture policy framework for Saskatchewan to guide government's actions and to confirm government's commitment to Saskatchewan's culture and cultural sector.

The department is also participating in the heritage discussions recently launched by SaskCulture to develop a strategy for lottery funded heritage activities. I see these efforts as complementary.

The report laid the foundation that will guide us in our future strategies. Since the release of this report, the provincial government has acted in various ways to respond to the issues raised by the Interim Heritage Council. I look forward to working with organizations and individuals who are interested in supporting Saskatchewan's rich heritage.

Yours truly,



Jack Hillson
Minister of Municipal Affairs,
Culture and Housing