

News Release



Recreation for Life

Tuesday, May 10, 2005

ARPA Welcomes Provincial Commitment to Infrastructure

Edmonton, AB - The recent provincial government announcement of \$3 billion to respond to municipal infrastructure needs is good news—if some of the money goes towards the existing recreation infrastructure deficit, says Kay Kenny, President of ARPA.

“We have a severe problem in Alberta—many of our 350 community facilities such as arenas, pools and curling rinks need significant capital upgrading. Some are in critical need of repair and some are nearing a point where they may not even be safe for people to visit,” adds Kenny.

The current replacement value of community recreation facilities needing upgrading is approximately \$1 billion. “By investing \$270 million now, municipalities and the province would be saving about 4 times as much later,” she adds.

The ARPA has been advocating for years to increase provincial funding for recreation infrastructure repairs. About 75% of community recreation facilities in Alberta are at least 25 years old. The extent of needed capital upgrades has been well documented through formal architectural, structural, electrical and mechanical assessments of over 100 facilities conducted with the assistance of Alberta Community Development, Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Gaming.

“We recognize that there are many demands facing municipalities, but more importantly most have recognized the need for repair of recreational infrastructure. Our original advocacy proposal was to have municipalities share in the capital upgrading on a 50-50 basis with the province. Hopefully that can occur now that the province has committed the \$3 billion. The provincial portion of the repair budget, would amount to about 5% of that. On a larger scale, however, these funds don’t even begin to address provincial population growth over the past 10 years and the need for new community recreation facilities,” states Kenny.

Increasing citizen participation in recreation is one of the best ways that health care costs can be reduced. Maintaining recreational facilities and providing locations for people to pursue safe, healthy physical activities is key to healthy active communities. It is particularly true in rural areas, where there are fewer recreational options and where the recreational facilities are a focal point of the community and its sustainability.

Over the next few weeks, the ARPA will be arranging meetings with the Minister of Alberta Infrastructure, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties to further advocate for the allocation of funds to recreational infrastructure upgrading. “Hopefully we can get everyone on-side and we can see some positive outcomes in the very near future,” concludes Kenny.

ARPA is a provincial, not-for-profit charitable organization with a membership that includes community and public recreation agencies, along with educators, corporate, elected, voluntary and student members. ARPA’s mission is to “build healthy citizens, their communities and their environments throughout Alberta”. ARPA members represent over 2.5 million Albertans in every region of the province.

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