



June 2, 2009

UMQ welcomes opening up of Infrastructure Stimulus Fund to culture, recreation and sports

The Québec Union of Municipalities (UMQ) is very pleased with today's announcement by the federal and provincial governments that the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund will be expanded to cover renovation projects for cultural, recreational and sports infrastructure. For several months the UMQ has been insisting to both levels of government that the fund should be able finance this type of infrastructure in order to meet the varying needs of municipalities. The UMQ also welcomes the broader version of the fund's communities component and the willingness of both governments to finance investment in green space and waste management, another priority for municipalities.

"Most municipalities in Québec have substantial needs in terms of cultural, recreational and sports infrastructure. It's crucial that these needs be met if we intend to occupy and use our respective land areas in dynamic ways," said UMQ president Robert Coulombe, mayor of Maniwaki. "We see how important this type of infrastructure is when certain communities are torn apart because they must choose between investing in a sports arena or a library. Today's announcement represents a step in the right direction, and we're hoping that from now on these infrastructures, which play a key role in the dynamics of community life, will be an integral part of all infrastructure programs."

The UMQ also pointed out the impact this news will have on job creation. "By expanding the list of projects eligible for funding, both governments are contributing more effectively to economic recovery by encouraging different types of project startups.

This will help a much larger pool of men and women find work at a time when unemployment is rising at an alarming rate in various regions," Coulombe said.

The UMQ also reminded both governments of the urgent need for an accelerated approval process. "Projects have to be approved quickly in view of the March 2011 deadline. The construction season in Québec is already under way now," Coulombe pointed out. At its *Assises annuelles* (annual session), the UMQ discussed this urgent need with Premier Charest and Prime Minister Harper. Both governments at that time publicly affirmed their intention to get things moving faster in order to allow projects to start up quickly.

Source:

François Sormany

Director of Marketing and Communications
Telephone: 514-282-7700, extension 265
Cell: 514-910-7272
fsormany@umq.qc.ca