

## Provincial Pre-Budget Submission

Your CTF recently met with Finance Minister Selinger, Liberal leader Jon Gerrard and PC leader Hugh McFadyen to present CTF recommendations for the province's 2009 budget.

Below are the top ten recommendations from the CTF's submission. To view all the recommendations and the full submission, please visit [taxpayer.com](http://taxpayer.com).

1. Increase the basic personal exemption, spousal deduction and index tax brackets to the rate of inflation;
2. Begin a ten-year phase-out of school taxes;
3. Phase-out the top personal income tax rate, beginning with a reduction to 16.9% for 2009;
4. Phase-out the payroll tax by 2018;
5. Continue to phase-out the capital tax;
6. Establish an all-party committee to identify potential



- savings;
7. Establish a 15-year plan to eliminate Manitoba's debt and restore the province's balanced budget legislation;
  8. Formalize a goal of making Manitoba a "have" province by 2018;

9. Remove the moratorium on new hog barn facilities; and
10. Open up private competition in vehicle insurance, health care, and liquor retail. Further, allow private companies to build hydro dams in Manitoba.

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Think a balanced budget sounds ambitious? Consider this: had Manitoba's spending increased at the rate of inflation and population growth since 1999, spending for 2008 would be \$2.1-billion below current levels. The sum of all spending above the rate of inflation is about \$8.9-billion — enough to pay-off the province's \$6.4-billion debt, with \$2.5-billion left over. ■

## City Pre-Budget Submission 2009

The CTF met with Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz and was pleased that he responded to our top two recommendations — business tax relief and continuing the property tax freeze.

Here are five recommendations presented to the Mayor on how the city could improve

its operations:

1. Bring city salaries and benefits in-line with the private sector;
2. Sell-off surplus land and non-core assets like the city's twelve golf courses and parkades;
3. Remove union barriers that prevent volunteers

- from helping to deliver city services;
4. Contract out appropriate services; and
5. Continue to develop P3s for capital projects.

Your CTF will provide updates on both budgets once they are tabled. ■

## UNCOVERED BY THE CTF...

Your CTF continues to look under 'government rocks' to uncover waste. Below are a couple of recent discoveries by the Manitoba office:



by Colin Craig  
Manitoba Director

### Keyask Dam costs

A shovel hasn't even hit the ground for the proposed Keyask Dam slated for northern Manitoba, but the costs are already raising eyebrows. According to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests filed by the CTF, Manitoba Hydro has transferred over \$35-million to the "Cree Nation Partners" (Tataskweyak Cree Nation and the War Lake Reserve) for "process and negotiation costs" related to the dam. Similar expenditures for Conawapa and Wuskwatin bring the grand total to \$39.4-million.

Imagine that. More than \$35-million has been spent on negotiations and process costs, yet a shovel hasn't even hit the ground. Your CTF and local band members have been pushing for details on how those dollars were spent, but so far our requests have fallen on deaf ears.

### "Gift Gate"

In 2006, Manitoba hosted the Western Premiers Conference. Dignitaries from the western United States and Mexico were also invited

to the event.

Looking back, it is easy to see why the politicians wore such big grins during photo-ops at the conference. According to FOIs filed by the CTF, over \$25,000 was spent on gifts for the 105 "dignitaries" that attended. Although the numbers are still coming in, the "gift tab" works out to an average of \$250 per attendee. Gifts included jackets, denim shirts, "Hyde Port garment bags," fishing reels, regular bags, scarves, fishing scales and chocolates. No wonder bags were handed out, attendees needed something to carry all their gifts around in!

The CTF also discovered that attendees were treated to a \$10,000 private concert and dinner which featured award winning country band *Doc Walker*.

The kicker is that over \$35,000 of these costs were paid for by Manitoba's crown corporations. That's right — your Autopac payments in 2006 helped buy pricey gifts for visiting politicians and bureaucrats. ■

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### Did you know?

In 1999, the provincial government's top tax rate applied to income above \$59,180. Today, the top rate of 17.4% is now applied to income above \$67,000. As CTF supporters know, Manitoba's tax system is not adjusted for inflation. Had the top threshold increased with the rate of inflation, taxpayers wouldn't pay the top rate until their incomes surpassed \$73,060. For someone earning \$75,000, the CTF estimates that's an annual tax grab of over \$400 per year.

### We're Hiring

The CTF in Manitoba is hiring fundraisers to help fund the good fight. Call 1-866-224-5058 for more information.