

Manitoba Youth Town Hall Meeting with Ministers
April 29, 2005
Brandon, Manitoba

Introduction

In 2000, the Premier's Youth Round Table was held at Rural Forum in Brandon and prompted youth participants to call for regular meetings with the Premier and Ministers. As a result, since 2001, the MB4Youth Division of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) had hosted eight Manitoba Youth Town Hall Meetings with Ministers in Brandon, Thompson, and Winnipeg. The Town Hall has been a catalyst for further youth actions by MECY including:

- **mb4youth.ca website:** Connects youth to over 200 services and programs offered by the government of Manitoba.
- **MB4Youth Advisory Council:** Consists of up to 15 members between the ages of 15-24 who demonstrate strong leadership skills and represent the diversity of Manitoba. They provide feedback to MECY on programming and policy issues such as education, jobs, leadership, citizen engagement and broader issues such as health and the environment.

The 2005 Youth Town Hall Meeting with Ministers

Since the Department expanded to include the Citizenship portfolio, it wanted to host an annual Citizenship Conference that would rotate throughout the province; in 2005, MECY decided to host the *Youth Citizenship in Action* conference in Brandon on April 28 and 29 in conjunction with Rural Forum.

On Day One, the conference featured keynote speaker Ian Ross ("Joe from Winnipeg"), and moved into workshops on environmental awareness and action plans; the benefits of volunteerism; and youth and democracy. Presenters included a Ukrainian election observer, and members of Elections Manitoba and the Manitoba Youth Parliament. Day Two was a unique opportunity as five Manitoba Cabinet Ministers spent the afternoon answering questions from youth during the Youth Town Hall. Approximately 90 students from 34 communities and 41 schools throughout Manitoba attended the two-day event.

Participating Ministers included Peter Bjornson, Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth; Theresa Oswald, Minister of Healthy Living; Scott Smith, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade; Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation; and Rosann Wowchuk, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives. The questions and answer sessions generated excellent discussion and themes of the day included:

- **Education:**

- Technical vocational and apprenticeship courses
- Tuition fees and scholarship funding
- Course options in small town schools

The government has been steadily increasing the minimum wage and Manitoba has the lowest tuition fees in Canada.

Students need to be their own “detectives” – talk to your guidance counsellor and research your options.

Honourable Peter Bjornson

Need some help with your detective work?

Manitoba Student Aid will be the Watson to your Sherlock...

[Hhttp://www.gov.mb.ca/educate/sfa/pages/sfaFrontDoor_en.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/educate/sfa/pages/sfaFrontDoor_en.html)

- **Healthy Living:**

- Increasing the age of tobacco sales
- Government initiatives to reduce smoking
- Healthier food choices in cafeterias

This government has taken a coordinated, comprehensive approach to reduce tobacco use, particularly among youth. Youth targeted non-smoking programs has shown the rate of youth smoking decrease from 29% to 21%.

Honourable Theresa

Oswald

For more information on how you and your school can get involved...

[Hhttp://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/smoking.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/smoking.html)

- **Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade:**

- Participation of youth student councillors on municipal councils
- Gambling revenues
- Relationship between provincial and municipal governments

Lotteries take in approximately 260 million dollars and that money is directed to key priorities such as general revenue for such things as healthcare and education. Money directed to schools through lotteries supports recreation, buildings, bursaries and the tuition freeze.

Honourable Scott Smith

Want more info on lotteries community support initiatives?

[Hhttp://www.mlc.mb.ca/MLC/SOC/SOC_fr.htm](http://www.mlc.mb.ca/MLC/SOC/SOC_fr.htm)

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- Conservation:
 - School recycling programs
 - Preserving wildlife
 - Treaty hunting and fishing

We cannot continue to use energy without putting some back. Schools can help by setting up their own recycling programs and funding support is available for these types of projects.

Honourable Stan Struthers

Environmental Youth Corps can help you and your school with recycling and other sustainable development projects. For more information, see...

[Hhttp://www.susdev.gov.mb.ca/sdif.html](http://www.susdev.gov.mb.ca/sdif.html)H

- Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives:
 - Genetically Modified Organisms
 - Increasing slaughter house capacity
 - Fostering increased inter-provincial trade

BSE has hurt many families. As a government, we have instituted a multi-layered strategy to combat some of the ill effects this has had on our farmers. For example, we are working to increase our slaughter capacity and expand our trade partners. On an individual level, we can consume Manitoba products and support the campaign to promote the purchase of Manitoba beef.

Honourable Rosann Wowchuk

For more information on BSE and government initiatives to support Manitoba farmers

[Hhttp://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/livestock/anhealth/jaa06s01.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/livestock/anhealth/jaa06s01.html)H

Throughout the two-day event, youth engaged in a broad range of learning and leadership activities. They had an opportunity to work with others within their own peer groups, and exercise their critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and communication skills. They learned what issues they have in common with youth from various communities around Manitoba and came to appreciate those issues that were different.

A special thank you goes to the MB4Youth Advisory Council, Youth Parliament, 4H and the Green Team who acted as the facilitators and recorders for the sessions.