

News Release

Lack of cell service and public safety in spotlight

November 26, 2012 – The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) 14th Annual Convention began this morning and runs until Thursday, November 29.

President Doug Dobrowolski and Eastern Urban Director Mayor Chris Goertzen, City of Steinbach held a news conference at noon today to discuss the late resolution “*Improve Emergency and Cellular Service*”.

The RM of Stuartburn sponsored this resolution. It stems from a devastating wildfire that raged through the community of Vita on October 2, followed by a snowstorm on October 4, which crippled communications in the area resulting in a life-threatening situation for residents.

Over the past year, the RM of Stuartburn and the neighbouring municipalities of Franklin, Piney and LaBroquerie have had four emergencies - three wild fires and a power outage due to a severe winter storm. In all four emergencies, communications were inadequate, with cellular service that was spotty to non-existent.

Goertzen spoke on behalf of the Eastern District municipalities he represents. “Although the City of Steinbach, being an urban centre, is not lacking in this area we are greatly concerned about the communities around us - this affects our neighbours,” said Mayor Goertzen.

“This is about public safety and the safety of our emergency personnel while they are trying to protect the public. It is about doing something about this situation before a life is lost,” said Dobrowolski. “We have called on the provincial and federal governments to come together with the cell service carriers and with municipalities to work out a plan to move this issue forward.”

Resolutions sessions begin on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 at 3:30 pm. The resolution “*Improve Emergency and Cellular Service*” will be the first resolution debated at this time.