

Supporting Local

Over the last few years, Saskatchewan has led Canada in moving away from low price procurement to best value procurement. This shift has meant that when the government buys construction services, they can focus on which bidder offers the best overall package of value, not which one is just trying to buy the job with a low price (more on that under our 'Best Value' platform.) This shift was something that the industry asked for, specifically because it was intended to *better support local companies*.

Government needs to work to make sure that local companies have every opportunity to bid on work paid for by Saskatchewan tax dollars, and that the framework in place to do that is supported through all procurement avenues.

To get there will require a fundamental, cultural shift in procurement. Our principle is straightforward: ***when taxpayers are paying for work to be done, they should be reasonably sure that the money they're spending is going to support other taxpayers.***

In other words, Saskatchewan work should go to Saskatchewan companies.

While good progress has been made in this area, especially by the provincial government, still too many opportunities are going to out-of-province contractors. This needs to stop.

As a starting point, there are a number of practices that we are asking every candidate for MLA to support. Each of these practices will help support local companies while being acceptable within the trade agreement restrictions that Saskatchewan is bound by. The practices we are calling for include:

- Requiring that any company that works on a construction site is COR safety certified. This is an industry standard safety level, supported and governed right here in Saskatchewan by the SCSA, that guarantees the companies you're working with take safety seriously;
- Requiring that any company that works on a construction site has a membership in a local construction association – membership in a local association is a signal that a company is here to stay and that it has a commitment to supporting the local community too;
- Initiating a mandatory after-action report such that every time a project is awarded to an out-of-province company, it triggers a review that examines what happened and how the process can be improved going forward;
- Framing procurement as a local economic development process, not an administrative process, and making sure that everyone who works in procurement thinks of themselves as economic development officers supporting local business opportunities;

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- Considering the economic development impacts of selecting different vendors (and where they might spend their profit) when awarding contracts; and
- Investing in building relationships with local vendors prior to running a competition. In this pre-competition phase, you can educate vendors about the opportunities, learn from them about their capabilities, and determine how to shape the competition in order to provide the best possible advantages to local vendors.

For more information on this branch of our campaign, feel free to reach out to us at sca@scaonline.ca or call (306) 525-0171.

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