

2015

# Performance Report



# sama

SASKATCHEWAN ASSESSMENT  
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

# Contents

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- Agency Profile ..... 1**
- Key Performance Measures ..... 4**
  - Delivery of Property Assessment Services ..... 4***
    - KPM #1: Properties assessed for client municipalities ..... 4
    - KPM #2: On-time delivery of client services ..... 8
    - KPM #3: Client satisfaction ..... 9
  - Quality of Property Assessment Services ..... 10***
    - KPM #4: Amount of assessment at risk through appeals ..... 10
    - KPM #5: Confirmation of municipal assessment rolls ..... 12
  - Cost of Property Assessment Services ..... 13***
    - KPM #6: SAMA's Technology Infrastructure Program ..... 13
    - KPM #7: Agency operating costs ..... 16
  - Workforce Commitment ..... 17***
    - KPM #8: Workforce turnover ..... 17
    - KPM #9: Employee engagement ..... 18



# Agency Profile

**Governing Legislation:** Established by *The Assessment Management Agency Act* in 1987 to manage Saskatchewan's property assessment system for the Province, municipalities and the education sector.

**Corporate Structure:** Corporation with Board of Directors appointed by Order in Council.

**Services Provided to the Province:** Property assessment research and policy development, central database of assessment information, assessment information for programs administered by the provincial government, and assessment quality assurance.

**Services Provided to Client Municipalities and the Education Sector:** Property assessment valuation services – annual maintenance property inspections, targeted property reinspections, revaluations every four years, support of value (management of property assessment appeals) and public education.

**Accountable to:** Minister of Government Relations, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, client municipalities, the education sector and the public.

**Annual operating budget:** \$17.557 million for fiscal year ending December 31, 2015.

**Permanent staff:** 144.75 FTEs with an additional 6.0 FTEs to service the City of Moose Jaw assessment services contract.

## Client Municipalities and Property

2015	Urban Municipalities	Rural Municipalities	Northern Municipalities	Total		Change from 2014	
				Accounts <sup>4</sup>	Properties	Accounts	%
<b>No. of Client Municipalities<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>451<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>296</b>	<b>14<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>761</b>		-1	-0.1%
<b>No. of Property Accounts<sup>1</sup></b>							
Agricultural Land	2,047	474,292	609	476,948	476,948	851	0.2%
Urban Land	178,663	78,564	15,414	272,641	272,641	2,623	1.0%
<b>Total Land Accounts</b>	<b>180,710</b>	<b>552,856</b>	<b>16,023</b>	<b>749,589</b>	<b>749,589</b>	<b>3,474</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
Residential Buildings	123,709	74,118	8,826	206,653	N/A <sup>5</sup>	3,589	1.8%
Commercial Buildings	18,079	7,480	997	26,556	N/A <sup>5</sup>	-2	0.0%
<b>Total Building Accounts</b>	<b>141,788</b>	<b>81,598</b>	<b>9,823</b>	<b>233,209</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>3,587</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Oil & Gas Improvements	21	36,870	41	36,932	N/A <sup>6</sup>	219	0.6%
Oil & Gas Equipment	45	86,428	145	86,618	86,618	3,561	4.3%
Mine Equipment	0	30	6	36	36	2	5.9%
Pipelines & Railways	419	2,549	6	2,974	2,974	43	1.5%
<b>Total Industrial Accounts</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>125,877</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>126,560</b>	<b>89,628</b>	<b>3,825</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
<b>Total Property Accounts</b>	<b>322,983</b>	<b>760,331</b>	<b>26,044</b>	<b>1,109,358</b>	<b>839,217</b>	<b>10,886</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

### Notes:

1. Excludes the City of Moose Jaw assessment services contract.
2. Cities (8), towns (141), villages (263) and resort villages (39).
3. Northern towns (2), northern villages (11) and Northern Saskatchewan Administration District (1).
4. The number of property components that are assessed by the agency. There may be more than one assessable component on a property.
5. Residential and commercial building components are located on urban and agricultural land properties.
6. Oil & gas improvement components are located on the same sites as oil & gas equipment.

### **Enhancing Value For Stakeholders**

In 2015 the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency completed its second year of the Technology Infrastructure Program and continued to make incremental gains in both the total amount of work that the agency performs and the efficiency in how the work is done. 2015 saw a slightly decreased demand for some of the agency's services (due to a slower rate of growth in the construction of properties), but there were also increased workloads in other areas which demanded more resources (such as a higher amount of property appeals). SAMA continued to increase its output, while at the same time making progress towards making sure existing property assessments are current and accurate, providing municipalities the resources they need to succeed and grow.

Continued economic growth for Saskatchewan in 2015 resulted in continued growth in property assets within Saskatchewan municipalities. Property accounts grew by 1.0% to 1,109,358 accounts and industrial property accounts grew by 3.1% to 126,560 accounts.

The assessments conducted in 2015 by SAMA provided an additional estimated \$25.8 million in annually recurring tax revenues for the agency's municipal clients and the education sector. Of the \$25.8 million, municipalities received approximately \$16.9 million and the education sector received approximately \$8.9 million (\$1.50 billion was added to the taxable assessments of SAMA clients, the provincial average municipal mill rate was 11.2700 and the education sector mill rate was 5.9329).

The agency conducted 61,517 property reviews in calendar year 2015. This increase represented the fourth consecutive annual increase in the agency's output of property reviews and a 2.7% increase over 2014. 2015 had the most property reviews ever conducted by the agency under current staffing levels.

2015 was the third year in the province's 4-year revaluation cycle (the last revaluation was in 2013). Accordingly, the agency spent the year in preparation for the 2017 revaluation and continued to both meet municipality's demands for property maintenance and worked toward increasing the amount of property reinspections completed. The largest emerging challenge for the agency was to deal with higher than expected numbers of appeals than are typically seen in the third year of the revaluation cycle, while concurrently managing the agency's Technology Infrastructure Program.

### **Continuous Improvement With A Client Focus**

The agency continues to strive towards moving the annual maintenance program forward on the calendar with more of the work being completed before year-end. SAMA has also become more client-focused by giving clients the flexibility to request delivery of their maintenance program by a specific date that works best for them. Furthermore, the agency has implemented a fee-for-service that ensures that SAMA's efforts are directed towards property reviews most valued by our customers. These changes have helped SAMA to more accurately deliver the property reviews municipal clients want, when they want them.

SAMA continued its Technology Infrastructure (TI) Program in 2015. Phase 1 of the TI Program was successfully completed in 2015. In the latter half of 2015 the TI development team moved forward with Phase 2 of the program that will lead to further efficiency gains as the components of the new technology are implemented over the next two years. The upgrades will include Govern system enhancements, handheld computers and GIS technology that will increase employee efficiency and allow staff to spend more time in the field conducting inspections. SAMA expects these improvements to reduce the current reinspection cycle from 40 to 50 years down to 12 years (following the completion of the upgrades). By the end of 2015, the staff training portion of the first major system improvement of the project had been completed. SAMA expects the amount of property reviews per appraiser to increase substantially in the near future due to efficiency gains in the data collection and input process.

In May 2014 SAMA introduced a \$20 per parcel maintenance fee for any supplementary maintenance and 2015 maintenance completed for the agency's client municipalities. The new fee was charged for

the first time in 2015, creating a new stable source of funding for the agency that links SAMA's work directly to fees paid by municipal clients.

During 2015 SAMA continued work on amending assessment policies for the 2017 revaluation cycle. Residential cost simplification progressed via a new Residential Benchmark Guide and training program that was rolled out to SAMA assessors. Additionally, in early 2015, the agency received approval for its 2015 Base Year Manual and 2015 Cost Guide. This approval allowed SAMA to move forward to complete over 95% of the market analysis work required to prepare the new assessments for the 2017 revaluation by December 31, 2015.

### **Stabilization of SAMA's Funding and Workforce**

In 2015 the agency had an operational workforce of 144.75 permanent staff and the operating budget increased \$488,000 (2.9%) to \$17.557 million.

Budgeted funding party shares for SAMA operations were shifted to 59.8% provincial and 40.2% municipal (61.3% and 38.7% in 2014, respectively) as the municipal revenue increased \$508,000 (8.1%) over the 2014 level and the provincial funding increased \$151,000 (1.5%).

Budgeted capital funding party shares for SAMA were \$624,000 from municipalities (unchanged from 2014) and \$612,000 provincial (new funding for 2015).

The agency has been very successful with implementing business improvements and the productivity gains that have been attained have allowed SAMA to substantially increase production levels while maintaining the workforce at existing levels. Without business improvement changes it would have been very difficult for SAMA to keep up with the current demand for assessment services from SAMA's municipal clients over the past few years.

<b>2015 Operating Budget</b>	<b>2015 Budget</b>	<b>2015 Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>	
			<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><u>REVENUES (000s)</u></b>				
Provincial - Operating	\$10,238	\$10,238	\$0	0.0%
Municipal Requisition	6,883	6,915	32	0.5%
Other Revenue	436	360	-76	-17.4%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$17,557</b>	<b>\$17,513</b>	<b>-\$44</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURES (000s)</u></b>				
Salaries and Benefits	\$12,588	\$12,044	-\$544	-4.3%
Other Expenses	4,969	4,286	-\$683	-13.7%
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$17,557</b>	<b>\$16,330</b>	<b>-\$1,227</b>	<b>-7.0%</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,183</b>		
Inter-fund Transfers to Capital Fund	\$0	-\$1,029		
Reserves (Net)	0	-90		
Beginning Surplus	0	295		
<b>Ending Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$359</b>		
<b><u>Staffing (FTEs)</u></b>				
Permanent Employees	144.75	144.75		
Managed Employee Vacancies	0.0	0.0		
<b>Staff Complement</b>	<b>144.75</b>	<b>144.75</b>		

# Key Performance Measures

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## Delivery of Property Assessment Services

### KPM #1: Properties assessed for client municipalities

#### 1. Annual Maintenance Program

The annual maintenance program reviews and updates all properties with developments or changes that may affect the property's assessed value. The municipality submits a list of the properties affected, and the agency reviews each identified property and provides the municipality with an updated assessed value for their assessment roll.

By December 31, 2015 municipal clients submitted 39,183 residential, commercial and agricultural land properties for review – 23,132 properties for use on 2015 municipal assessment rolls and 16,051 properties for use on 2016 municipal assessment rolls.

#### The Agency's Performance

In 2015, the agency reviewed 23,132 properties for use on 2015 municipal assessment rolls, and in Q3 and Q4 the agency reviewed 13,807 properties for use on 2015 municipal assessment rolls.

Annual maintenance reviews were completed on 36,939 residential, commercial and agricultural land properties – 94.3% of the 39,183 properties submitted for review. The remaining 2,214 properties plus an estimated additional 15,500 properties still expected from municipalities will be reviewed in Q1 and Q2 of 2016.

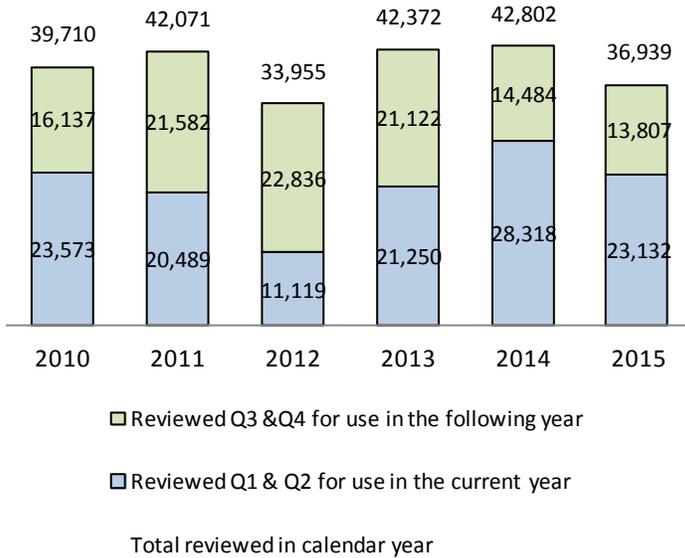
The agency continues to level out the annual maintenance workload by advancing annual maintenance work to the preceding year and works toward spreading the workload more evenly over the last months of the calendar year. This helps the agency to provide more timely delivery of the service to client municipalities.

2015 was the first year of a new maintenance fee-for-service initiative. A \$20 per maintenance review charge was implemented in May 2014 and first charged to municipalities in February 2015.

Municipalities now approve their requested chargeable maintenance lists prior to the work being performed. The number of completed residential, commercial and agricultural maintenance requests decreased in 2015 due to a combination of reduced levels of economic growth and increased selectivity in requests for maintenance (due to the new fee-for-service charge).

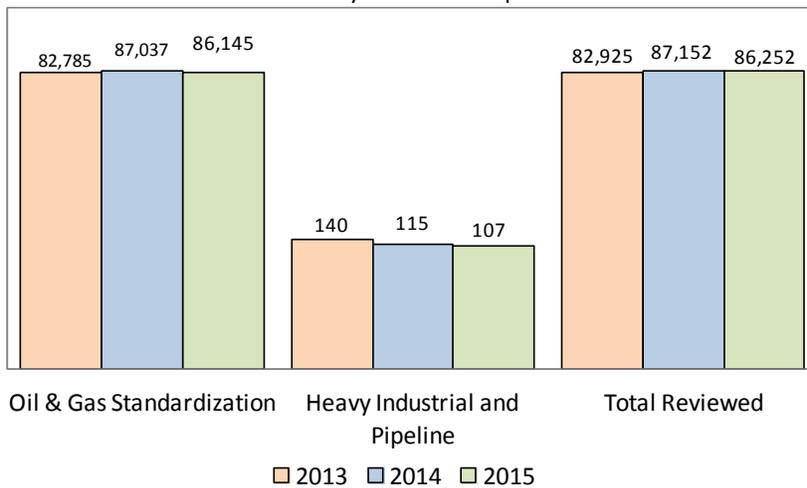
### Annual Maintenance Reviews

Number of Residential, Commercial and Agricultural Properties



### Annual Maintenance Reviews

Number of Oil & Gas, Pipeline and Heavy Industrial Properties



Annual maintenance reviews were completed on 86,252 industrial properties in 2015.

In the mid-1990s the agency standardized oil and gas well assessments utilizing well information attainable from Saskatchewan Ministry of the Economy. This allows the agency to review the assessment of all oil and gas wells annually, without conducting a time consuming and more costly field inspection.

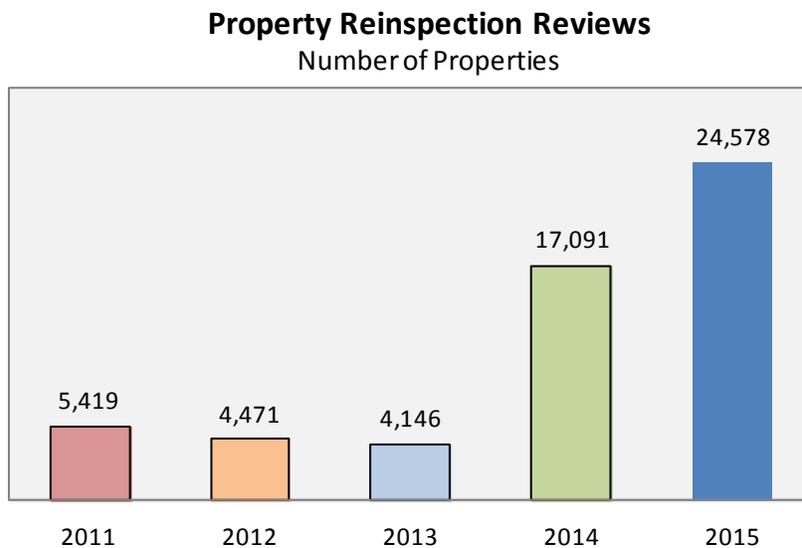
The volume of standardized oil and gas annual maintenance (86,145 properties) tends to overshadow the volume of other industrial property assessments. In 2015, the agency also reviewed 107 pipeline and heavy industrial properties.

## 2. Reinspection Program

Over time, property assessments become dated because of the cumulative effect of physical attribute and condition changes that are not identified for an annual maintenance review. There is also the risk of assessable properties being absent from a municipality's assessment roll. The general reinspection program undertakes to review each property to re-establish a uniform base of up-to-date property records for the municipality.

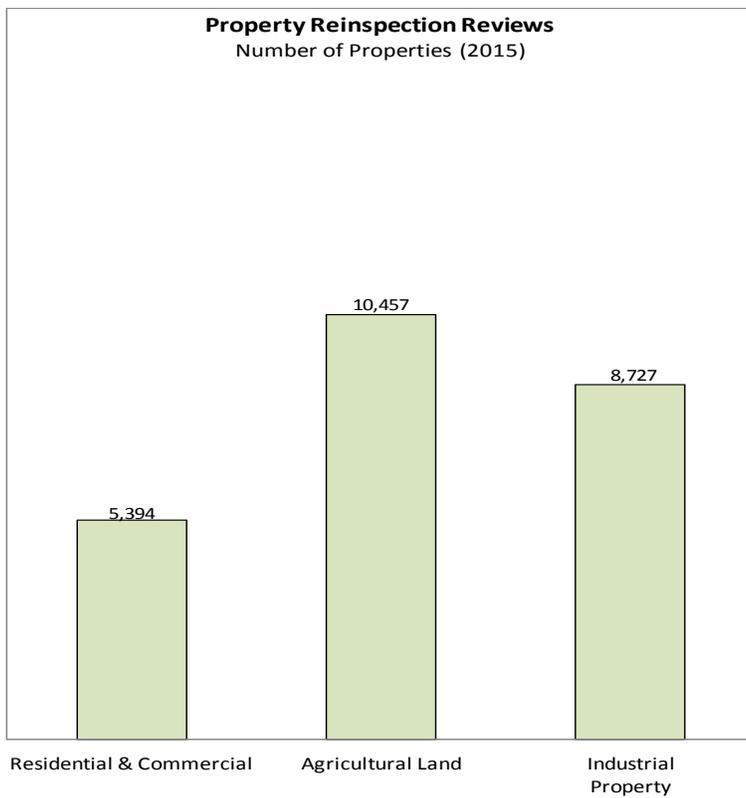
Over the past 20 years, the reinspection program was slowly eroded as the resourcing needs for the annual maintenance and revaluation programs grew. SAMA estimates, based on recent reinspection results, that 2-5% of assessable property may be currently left off of assessment rolls due to SAMA's inability to keep up with long-term reinspections on a province-wide basis. The agency recognized that a new approach to the reinspection program was needed in order to complete property reinspections in a timely manner, and has undertaken three initiatives to improve the reinspection program.

The first initiative is to increase appraiser efficiency and productivity in all program areas (reinspections, annual maintenance, revaluation and support of value) through various business improvement initiatives and to redirect those gains to the property reinspection program. During the past several years those gains have been partially used to enhance the reinspection program while also providing SAMA with more capacity to handle an increased demand for maintenance work and an increased level of appeals.



The second initiative is to simplify valuation policies and improve inspection efficiency. over the last two years SAMA has positioned itself to implement new simplified residential and commercial cost models starting in mid-2016. These policy changes are expected to increase our inspection capacity by over 20%.

The third initiative is the introduction of new technologies, intended to increase SAMA staff capacity to inspect properties. Numerous components of technology will be introduced at various times during the years 2015, 2016 and 2017.



The Agency's Performance

SAMA was able to allocate enough resources to its reinspection program in 2015 that the agency reinspected more properties than have been completed in any recent years. The agency reinspected 10,457 properties in 8 rural municipalities, 4831 residential reinspections and 563 commercial reinspections, targeting areas and municipalities where the assessments were estimated to be the furthest out-of-date. As part of the 8,727 industrial

reinspections, the agency conducted a flow-line audit project that reinspected 7,168 properties and resulted in a \$12,000,000 increase in annual taxable assessment available to the affected municipalities.

SAMA saw the most success in the reinspection of urban municipalities, with over \$5M in taxable assessment being added to the reinspected communities. This was an overall increase in taxable assessments of 12.8% and ranged from a low increase of 5.9% in one village to an increase of 31.8% in the most affected town.

Although SAMA's reinspection program has still not reached its goal of reaching a 12-year cycle, progress has been made. The 2015 reinspection program numbers are just over four-and-a-half times the number of properties reinspected just 4 years prior and the 24,578 properties are even slightly higher than the 23,114 reinspected in 2010 (at which time SAMA's workforce was 22 FTE's larger).

## **KPM #2: On-time delivery of client services**

The agency has undertaken to improve the on-time delivery of annual maintenance services to its client municipalities. Since 2008, the objective has been to advance the delivery of annual maintenance in an effort to ensure client municipalities can complete their assessment roll by the May 1<sup>st</sup> legislated deadline. Advancing maintenance deliveries to clients also carries the benefit of improving program efficiency by balancing out the agency's workload. The agency has also become more responsive to the needs of clients, implementing a system to deliver maintenance lists when desired by municipalities, rather than when convenient for the agency.

### The Agency's Performance

During 2015 the agency concentrated on communicating more often with client municipalities, reducing the turnaround time for completing annual maintenance and shifting its focus to delivering maintenance when municipalities require it.

SAMA delivered 95% of municipalities (165 of 173) their 2016 maintenance packages on-time in the latter part of 2015 and 54% of municipalities (351 of 651) their 2015 maintenance packages on-time in the early part of 2015. This represents a total on-time delivery of maintenance packages of 63% (a small decrease from 65% in 2014).

The large disparity between the deadlines met in the first part of 2015 and the latter are mainly due to three factors: delays in delivery of approved maintenance lists to SAMA (due to the new fee-for-service and its administrative processes), re-allocation of staff in preparation for the 2017 revaluation and staff resources being shifted to support of value functions rather than property maintenance. SAMA, along with the help of municipal administrators, held business process improvement events in 2015 to simplify and streamline the fee-for-service procedures and expects the percent of on-time maintenance package deliveries to improve in 2016.

The agency completed annual maintenance for use in 2016 for 165 (21.7%) of its 761 client municipalities (an increase over the 101 delivered by December 31, 2014). In 2013 the agency began to gather desired delivery dates from our customers. This has resulted in a decrease in year-end deliveries because clients are specifying dates spread between October and April, with many not desiring maintenance delivery until the first quarter of the following year.

### **KPM #3: Client satisfaction**

The agency strives to provide reliable, timely and complete assessment information services to client municipalities, the education sector, the provincial government, and property owners. As part of the measurement of the agency's performance, SAMA has contracted Tanka Resource Group Inc. to carry out an anonymous biannual survey of SAMA municipal clients. The feedback received in the survey is used by the agency to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The planning process will then assign resources to areas of weakness. The maintenance of reliable service, positive communications and relationships with clients is essential to the agency's ongoing success.

#### **The Agency's Performance**

The agency's biannual survey of client municipalities focuses on determining their level of satisfaction with the assessment services received. The results of the 2015 survey were very positive for SAMA and were consistent with the high levels of customer satisfaction found in previous surveys.

The agency maintained high rating levels from its client municipalities for customer service, annual maintenance services and overall satisfaction with the agency. The agency also maintained a high recommendation rating from its clients.



Client municipalities scored the agency at 4.5 out of 5 for customer service, a slight increase from 2013. In terms of customer service, clients were most satisfied with the manner in which they were treated by SAMA staff (fairly and with respect) and were least satisfied with being dealt with in a timely manner.

Client municipalities scored the agency at 4.6 out of 5 for annual maintenance services. 91% of respondents classified SAMA's service as either excellent (56%) or good (35%).

In the category of overall contact

satisfaction, the agency maintained very high scores.

In the 2013 survey, 99% of the survey respondents indicated that they would recommend SAMA's services to other clients. In 2015, all respondents replied that they would recommend SAMA.

The 2015 survey included a section that also asked clients about the SAMAView web application. 76% of respondents replied that they have at least tried SAMAView and 22% are regular users. One of SAMA's goals was to increase awareness of SAMAView and only 7% of respondents replied that they were unaware of SAMAView. Making SAMAView more user-friendly was the most requested change for the SAMAView application.

The feedback was a strong endorsement of the service that SAMA is providing. Respondents were most happy with the quality of SAMA service and the manner in which the services are delivered. The most common areas of dissatisfaction were the timeliness of service delivery and the lack of access/communication with SAMA staff.

## Quality of Property Assessment Services

### **KPM #4: Amount of assessment at risk through appeals**

Property owners who believe that their property's assessed value is not accurate may appeal the assessment to the local board of revision, and subsequently to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board and the Court of Appeal.

The agency's appraisers will meet with property owners to identify and resolve any valuation errors prior to the formal appeal process. Dealing with property owners directly to swiftly correct assessment errors is a priority for the agency. Quick resolution increases stakeholder confidence in SAMA and reduces support of value costs and efforts for all parties involved. Where there is not an apparent resolution to a property owner's concerns, the agency provides the municipality with professional appraisal and legal expertise to support the property assessment values through all levels of appeal.

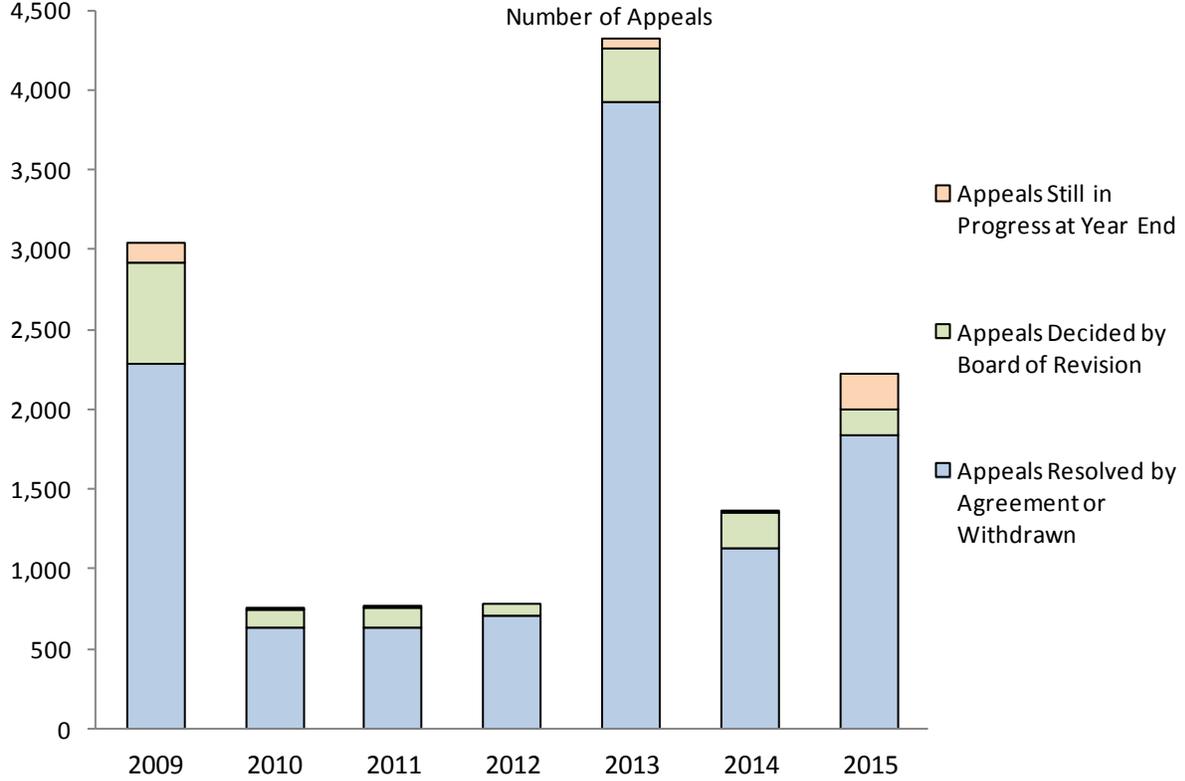
### The Agency's Performance

Once every four years the agency revalues all properties in each of its client municipalities to reflect a more current valuation base date. The 2013 Revaluation involved the revaluation of 818,388 properties (783,011 in 2009), and appeals were initiated on 2,225 properties (there were 1,368 appeals in 2014 and 4,321 in 2013, the most recent revaluation year).

The 2,225 appeals in 2015 represent an increase over the previous year (1,368), although the number resolved by agreement to adjust or that were withdrawn was 1,837 (82.6%). The 2,225 appeals represent an appeal rate of 0.26% (2,225 appeals of the 839,217 properties). Additionally, the value of properties appealed was equal to 0.9% of the property database (780.4M of the 92.3B total database). As a result of appeals, SAMA clients had a 0.20% decrease to taxable assessments (-0.33% in 2014).

2015 was another year of increased numbers of appeals, representing 8.7 FTE's or approximately 11% of SAMA's assessor resources. In the first 3 years of the last revaluation cycle (2009 to 2011) there were 4,537 appeals. SAMA has dealt with 7,912 appeals in the first 3 years of the current cycle (2013 to 2015), a 74.4% increase. The demand for support of value has forced SAMA to allocate a portion of its gains in efficiencies from other areas to deal with appeals rather than expanding the provincial reinspection program. The increased number of appeals are attributed to large assessment changes during the 2013 revaluation, an error in the oil and gas standardization process that initiated 1,120 property appeals, increased numbers of flooded land and an increased level of knowledge of assessment amongst property owners. These are in addition to the simple fact that there is an ever-increasing number of total properties within the province.

## Property Assessment Appeals



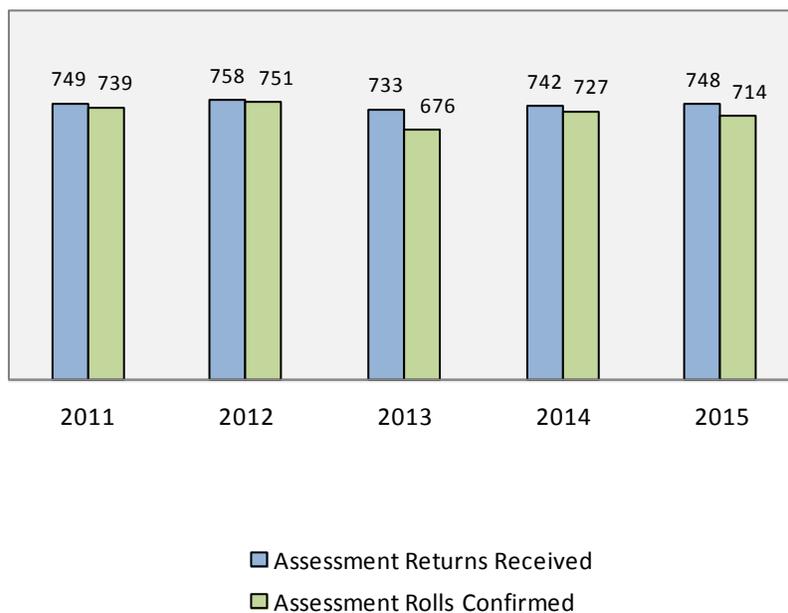
\*2015 includes 1,120 oil and gas appeals due to a standardization process error

## **KPM #5: Confirmation of municipal assessment rolls**

The SAMA Board is responsible for confirming the assessment roll of all Saskatchewan municipalities after taking steps to ensure that the assessments in the municipality have been completed in accordance with legislation. Municipalities require this confirmation to allow them to enforce the collection of property taxes.

Both confirmation audits and primary audits are conducted to determine whether a municipality's assessments have been prepared and administered in accordance with the municipal Acts.

### **Confirmed Assessment Rolls**



### **The Agency's Performance**

There were 770 municipalities in Saskatchewan in 2015 – 762 municipalities received their valuation services from the agency and 8 municipalities provided their own valuation services.

The confirmation process is initiated when a municipality submits its annual assessment return.

For the 2015 assessment roll year, 748 (96.0%) of all municipalities had submitted their assessment return by December 31, 2015.

The agency confirmed 714 (94.3%) of the submitted assessment rolls as of December 31, 2015, and 34 assessment returns were still being processed.

Primary audits are conducted as part of the confirmation process to ensure that the overall level of appraisal for a municipality falls into the acceptable range prescribed in Provincial regulations. Of the 748 municipal assessment returns received, 714 received compliant audit reports as of December 31.

## Cost of Property Assessment Services

### **KPM #6: SAMA's Technology Infrastructure Program**

In 2014, SAMA implemented a four year 2014-2017 funding plan, which included a capital project for new technology called the Technology Infrastructure (TI) Program.

SAMA recognized that our inspection capacity was below where it needed to be, and through the use of updated technology and more efficient business practices the Agency sought to double our ability to carry out inspections.

2015 was the second year of SAMA's four year TI Program, which is being implemented in 6 phases throughout the four-year run of the program.

The phases of the program worked on in 2015 include:

#### **Phase 1: Implementation of Open Forms in Govern Classic**

In phase 1 of the TI program, SAMA updated the user interface of our internal computer system, which is called Govern. The new interface makes inputting information faster and more efficient improving the quality of the data in the system and allowing SAMA's appraisers to spend more time in the field and less time doing data entry.

Phase 1 has already been completed and implemented, and staff have been trained on using the updated system. SAMA is already seeing promising increases in the amount of inspections per day our appraisers are able to complete on the new system.

#### **Phase 2: Implementation of updated Govern System**

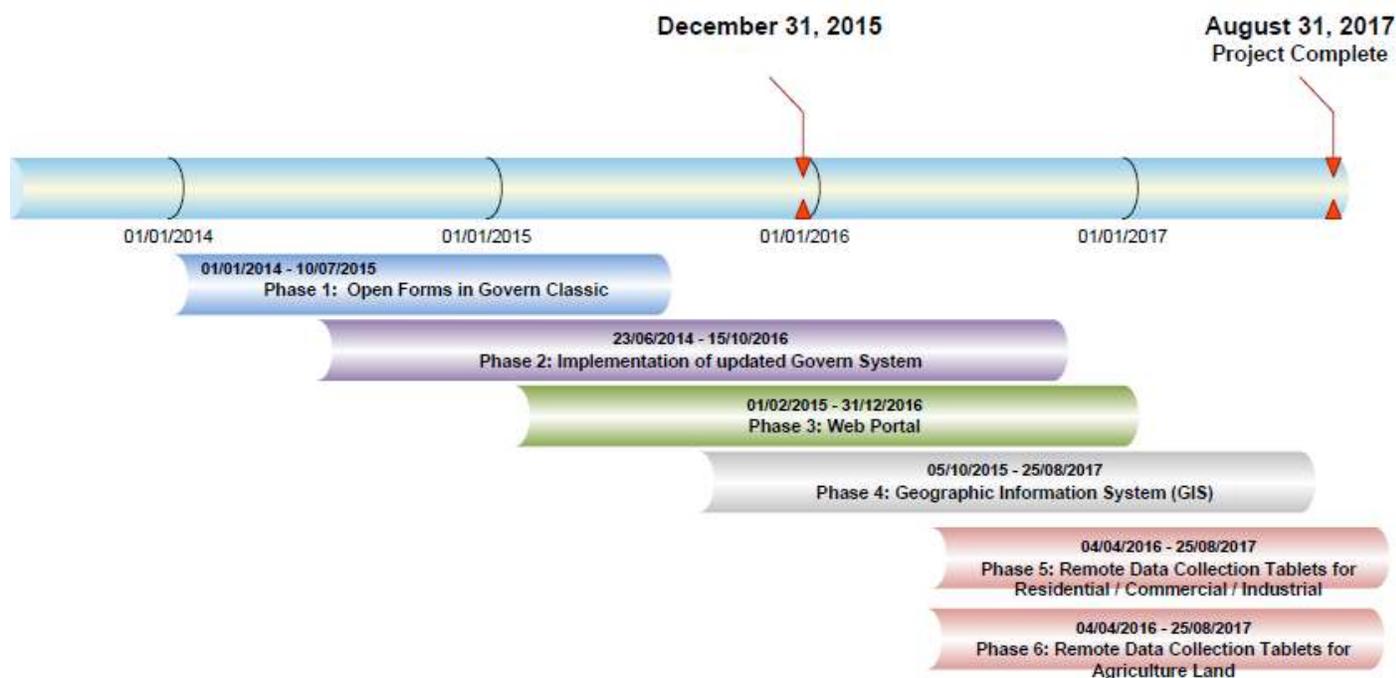
In phase 1 of the TI Program, SAMA updated the user interface of our Govern computer system. Phase 2 of the TI Program will see the internal workings of the Govern system updated and modernized. This will improve the speed, reliability and functionality of the system, as well as pave the way for the implementation of remote data collection in phases 5 and 6.

#### **The Agency's Performance**

SAMA worked with its application service provider, MS Govern, to complete the first phase of the program ("Open Forms") , and the software upgrades are available on the agency's central database system (Govern 6.0). SAMA has conducted a large training program in 2015 and all appraisers will, in early 2016, be utilizing the new Open Forms assessment data entry methods, allowing for SAMA staff to increase maintenance and reinspection efficiency.

Development work on Phase 2 of the TI program, where the fundamental elements of the entire Govern program are being updated, started in early 2014 and continued throughout 2015. Phase 2 is currently in the implementation preparation stage, with system bugs being worked on and preparations being made for inputting preliminary values into the new system in 2016. Phase 2 is slightly behind schedule at year-end, with implementation of the .net program now being planned for September 2016.

# Technology Infrastructure Program Timeline



2015 TI Program Capital Budget		2015 Budget	2015 Actual	Variance Amount	Variance %
<b>REVENUES (000s)</b>					
Provincial - Technology Premium*		\$612	\$612	\$0	0.0%
Municipal - Technology Premium		612	624	12	2.0%
<b>Total Technology Development Revenues</b>		<b>\$1,224</b>	<b>\$1,236</b>	\$12	1.0%
<b>CAPITALIZED COSTS (000s)</b>					
Phase I of Project - Open Forms		\$0	\$327	\$327	0.0%
Phase II of Project - .net Conversion**		\$459	\$482	\$23	5.0%
Phase III of project - web portal, handhelds, GIS		765	319	-\$446	-58.3%
<b>Total Technology Development Expenditures</b>		<b>\$1,224</b>	<b>\$1,128</b>	<b>-\$96</b>	<b>-7.8%</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$108</b>		
Inter-fund Transfers to Capital Fund		\$0	\$451		
Reserves (Net)		0	412		
<b>Ending Surplus (Deficit)</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$971</b>		

\*revenues are deferred until completion of project

SAMA's TI Program, combined with other ongoing Business Process Improvements (BPI), have led to efficiency gains in several of the Agency's main activities:

### Annual Maintenance Program

The agency has successfully advanced the annual maintenance program by 3-4 months so that much of the work is now being completed and delivered in Q3 and Q4 of the year preceding when it will be used on the assessment roll.

By December 31, 2015 SAMA had reduced its estimated 2016 maintenance work to 17,714 properties (was 20,362 properties at end of 2014).

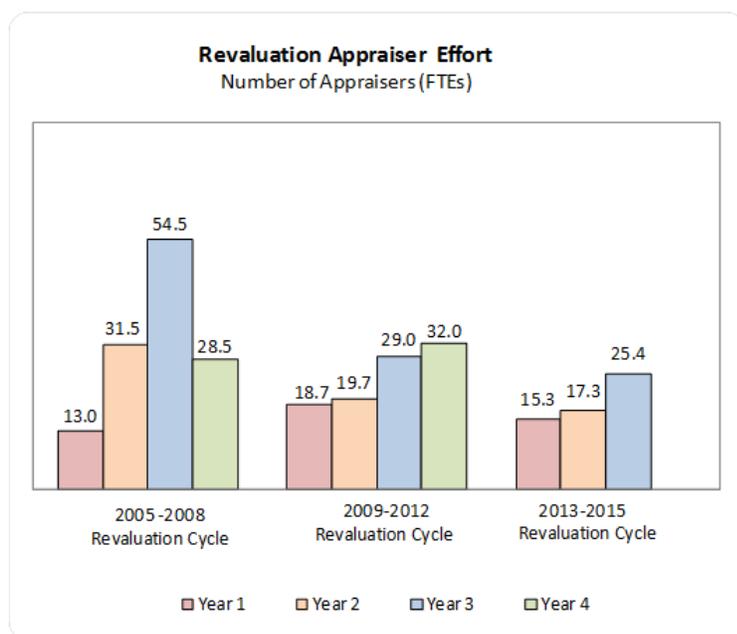
### Reinspection Program

2015 saw reinspection numbers not seen under SAMA's current staffing level. While maintaining the same staffing levels, SAMA was able to reinspect over 24,000 properties. The most effective reinspection activity in 2015 was an industrial flow-line audit that resulted in \$12,000,000 in new taxable assessment available to both municipalities and the provincial education sector.

### Revaluation Program

Business process improvement changes to the sales verification and market analysis processes have resulted in a significant reduction in total appraiser time on revaluation activities. 2014 was year 2 of the revaluation cycle and efforts were concentrated on sales verification. By the end of 2015 SAMA has reduced its number

of outstanding unverified sales records from 33,000 in 2008 to a December 31, 2015 balance of 1,852.



2013 to 2015 represent a 14% decrease in time spent on the revaluation in 2009-2011 and a 41% decrease over 2005-2007 (2009-11 and 2005-07 are the last two years 1, 2 and 3 revaluation cycles undertaken by SAMA). By spending less time on revaluation efforts, SAMA has been able to allocate more time to maintenance, reinspection and support of value activities.

In 2015 SAMA has in place a Process Change Manager who has worked to establish regional value streams and is

facilitating both the sharing of BPI ideas and best practices amongst SAMA's various office locations. The manager is an integral part of both the day-to-day BPI activities and the large changes occurring as the agency moves through the TI Program. The addition of this position has allowed the agency to hold an average of one BPI event per week and has raised engagement amongst staff by allowing for these events to often be held in regional offices (away from SAMA's central office), concentrating on local procedures and issues and gathering ideas from all levels of the organization. SAMA's Process Change Manager has helped the overall TI Program by ensuring that new processes and tools are not only available to the staff, but actually being utilized by them in their day-to-day work.

## **KPM #7: Agency operating costs**

The agency is responsible for providing quality, efficient and cost-effective assessment valuation services to client municipalities and the education sector. The agency served 762 cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities and northern communities in 2015.

The agency's business management model focuses on three areas – program delivery, performance management and accountability. Four-year business and financial plans and annual business and financial plans are developed in consultation with the agency's funding stakeholders, and annual performance reports are provided to the funding stakeholders.

The agency is working to continuously improve the integration of these plans with operational program delivery plans and to improve performance reporting both internally and externally to stakeholders.

### **The Agency's Performance**

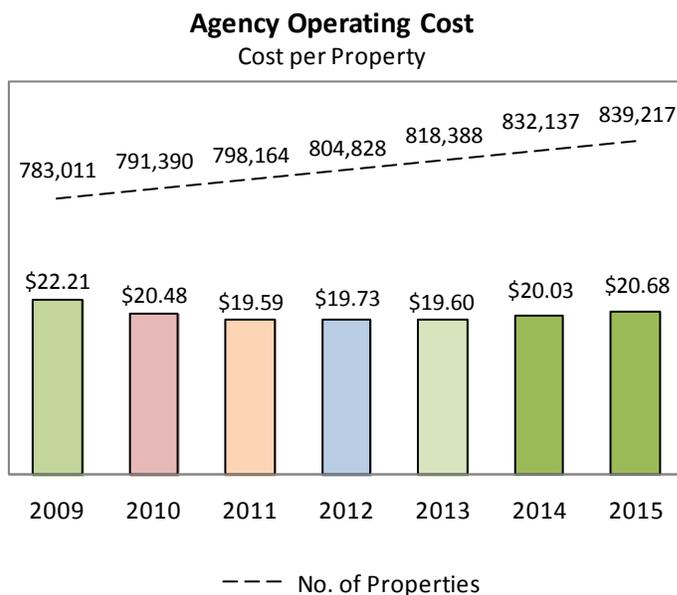
#### **1. Planning and reporting**

The agency has expanded the use of program charters throughout all program areas to define all work projects undertaken for each goal and objective set out in the agency's annual business and financial plan. Program charters set out the business need, scope, objectives and deliverables, milestones and key participants for each work project.

#### **2. Operating costs**

In 2015 the agency continued to hold operating costs per property at approximately the same level. The 2015 operating cost per property represents a 3% increase over the previous year .

Delivery of annual maintenance, revaluation and support of value services have been maintained and in many aspects improved over the past several years, while operating costs have remained relatively unchanged.



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## Workforce Commitment

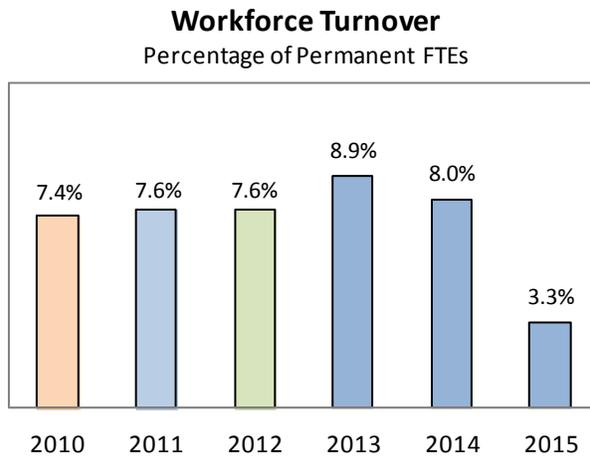
### KPM #8: Workforce Turnover

The agency's success in providing property assessment services within Saskatchewan depends on the knowledge, skills and expertise of our employees and the agency's ability to attract and retain a talented and skilled workforce in a labour-shortage market.

#### The Agency's Performance

2015 saw a huge improvement to the agency's turnover rate. Turnover decreased by more than half to 3.3%. SAMA has therefore met and even exceeded the established a goal of reducing the turnover rate to 5%.

Although it is impossible to determine the exact reasons for the decrease in turnover, SAMA has undertaken many initiatives to increase employee satisfaction. The most recent employee engagement survey saw a large increase in employees' faith in the leadership and organizational vision. This is attributable to both communication within the agency and a greater certainty regarding the future of SAMA. A second factor is that the organization has received positive feedback regarding employee relationships with their immediate managers. This has been accomplished via increased training and scheduled meetings, including one-on-one time between supervisors and employees. Although not all concerns brought forward by staff have been resolved (such as employee workload levels and work planning processes), the agency has acknowledged that problems exist and that the agency plans to act on the concerns of employees.



## **KPM #9: Employee Engagement**

The agency is striving to create a culture of motivated and engaged employees who work together in a productive, continuously improving environment, guided by leadership that is based on a clear and positive vision of the future, using processes that consistently deliver what is expected in order to consistently satisfy our clients' needs.

### **The Agency's Performance**

Employee engagement and organizational performance are critically linked and the agency conducts a biannual survey to determine the level of employee engagement, and to assist the agency in developing and implementing new initiatives and programs. SAMA conducted an employee engagement survey in 2015 to determine the agency's current employee engagement status and to identify possible areas for improvement. Once again, the survey had a very high response rate of 83% for all SAMA employees.

2015 was marked by an increase in favourable employee engagement, with a score of 57% (from 51% on the 2014 pulse survey and 46% on the last full employee engagement survey in 2013). SAMA was pleased to meet its previously set goal of a 5% increase over the 2013 results. Additionally, the employee survey also indicated that employee engagement had increased in all measured survey dimensions, indicating progress in many of the drivers of employee engagement, rather than in isolated areas.

SAMA's overall engagement continues to be behind the public sector benchmark used by the survey organization. SAMA administration continues to keep communication channels open with employees and to conduct employee exit interviews to identify organizational areas for improvement. On the engagement survey, the agency's staff scored SAMA as an employer most favourably in the following areas: employee/management relationships, training opportunities, employee benefits, work flexibility, and the organization's customer focus and vision. SAMA's future efforts to increase employee engagement will concentrate on the areas where scores were lowest: employee workloads, employee performance feedback, employee accountability, technological improvements to the assessment system and employee compensation levels.

With the current rapid pace of change and SAMA's Technological Infrastructure Program, the agency recognizes that employees are undergoing a major shift in the policies and procedures that affect their work, as well as new technological tools that are an essential part of day-to-day work. In 2015 SAMA scheduled and conducted a training program for all of the assessment services staff in the organization to help prepare them for the new open forms interface used to data-enter assessment information. The program was considered successful in that it was well received and feedback was positive.

### **A Qualified, Experienced, and Continually-Learning Workforce**

The agency employs the most comprehensive group of mass appraisal experts in the province of Saskatchewan and, as a provider of professional services, SAMA is committed to employing the most qualified and effective staff available. As such, SAMA encourages its employees to further their personal skill sets via education and training.

At the end of 2014, 58 of SAMA's 89 appraisers (65.2%, up from 60.9% in 2014) are fully accredited (have at least four years of assessment experience and have completed the educational requirements of an assessment designation). Five of SAMA's appraisers received their accreditation in 2015.

The agency values the years of experience that have been achieved by employees and knows that staff retention is paramount to the long-term success of SAMA. The average SAMA employee has just over fourteen years of service with the agency. Employing qualified staff and investing in their training helps to increase engagement and also the quality and efficiency of the province's assessment system over the long term.



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