

2016

# Performance Report



# sama

SASKATCHEWAN ASSESSMENT  
MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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# 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:** \$18.070 million for fiscal year ending December 31, 2016.

**Permanent staff:** 144.75 Full Time Equivalents (FTE's) with an additional 6.0 FTE's for the Moose Jaw contract.

## Client Municipalities and Property Accounts

	Urban Municipalities	Rural Municipalities	Northern Municipalities	Total		Change from 2015	
				Accounts <sup>4</sup>	Properties	Accounts	%
<b>No. of Client Municipalities<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>450<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>296</b>	<b>14<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>760</b>		-1	-0.1%
<b>No. of Property Accounts<sup>1</sup></b>							
Agricultural Land	2,067	475,039	609	477,715	477,715	767	0.2%
Urban Land	178,908	78,305	15,414	272,627	272,627	-14	0.0%
<b>Total Land Accounts</b>	<b>180,975</b>	<b>553,344</b>	<b>16,023</b>	<b>750,342</b>	<b>750,342</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
Residential Buildings	124,923	75,679	8,844	209,446	N/A <sup>5</sup>	2,793	1.4%
Commercial Buildings	18,244	7,646	1,007	26,897	N/A <sup>5</sup>	341	1.3%
<b>Total Building Accounts</b>	<b>143,167</b>	<b>83,325</b>	<b>9,851</b>	<b>236,343</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>3,134</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Oil & Gas Improvements	18	36,136	35	36,189	N/A <sup>6</sup>	-743	-2.0%
Oil & Gas Equipment	38	87,348	142	87,528	87,528	910	1.1%
Mine Equipment	0	21	6	27	27	-1	-3.6%
Pipelines & Railways	431	2,545	2	2,978	2,978	4	0.1%
<b>Total Industrial Accounts</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>126,050</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>126,722</b>	<b>90,533</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Total Property Accounts</b>	<b>324,629</b>	<b>762,719</b>	<b>26,059</b>	<b>1,113,407</b>	<b>840,875</b>	<b>4,057</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

### Notes:

1. Excludes the City of Moose Jaw assessment services contract.
2. Cities (8), towns (141), villages (262) 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.

### **Quality Service During Technological Change**

In 2016 the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency completed its third year of the Technology Infrastructure (TI) Program, marking a major milestone. The TI Program was a challenge to the Agency's resources because they had to be assigned in a manner that allowed SAMA to not only fulfill its core responsibilities, but also invest in the changes and upgrades required. These changes will make SAMA more efficient and increase the agency's capacity to inspect properties.

The highlight of the year's technological change was a transition to a new central assessment database (Govern 6.1) during December and delivery of initial values for the 2017 revaluation. 2016 was also a second consecutive year of steady growth in the number of assessable properties in Saskatchewan, although at a lesser pace than seen during the high-growth years of 2014 and prior. Finally, SAMA continued to feel pressure in the area of Support of Value during 2016. Not only was SAMA dealing with a relatively high number of assessment appeals, but also many commercial appeals which were of both a higher value and complexity. Furthermore, these appeals were at the Saskatchewan Municipal Board level and involved multiple years of assessment. While entering the fourth year of the TI Program, SAMA remains on the path towards doubling production by the end of 2018, in accordance with the plan implemented in 2014.

Continued economic growth for Saskatchewan in 2016 resulted in continued growth in property assets within Saskatchewan municipalities. Property accounts grew by 0.4% to 1,113,407 accounts and industrial property accounts grew by 0.1% to 126,722 accounts.

The assessments conducted in 2016 by SAMA provided an additional estimated \$17.0 million in annually recurring tax revenues for the agency's municipal clients and the education sector. Of the \$17.0 million, municipalities received approximately \$11.2 million and the education sector received approximately \$5.8 million (\$974.7 million was added to the taxable assessments of SAMA clients, the provincial average municipal mill rate was 11.4943 and the education sector mill rate was 5.9475).

The agency conducted 62,094 property reviews in calendar year 2016. This increase represented the fifth consecutive annual increase in the agency's output of property reviews and a modest 0.9% increase over 2015 (61,517 reviews in 2015).

2016 was the final 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 challenges of preparing for the revaluation was compounded by the concurrent conversion to the new Govern 6.1 assessment database.

### **Focusing on the Future Needs of Clients**

The agency continues to keep lines of communication open with municipalities, focusing on establishing service level expectations and meeting the needs of client municipalities. Changes from the past few years are now standard SAMA practice. This includes increased interaction between SAMA and clients which gives clients the flexibility to request delivery of their maintenance program by a specific date (a service charter) and establishing a process that focuses on work that clients value by having them submit lists of requested maintenance (SAMA's property review fee). 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 2016, albeit with several challenges. The TI Program continued to move through the latter parts of Phase 2 and the initial parts of Phase 3. The rollout of Govern 6.1 was delayed several months from the initial 4-year plan, but was implemented in December of 2016 on budget and without major flaws or disruptions. Work during the year included a rigorous training program for all appraisers and internal users of the central database system prior to implementation as well as several thousand hours spent on system development and data conversion.

The capabilities of the Govern 6.1 system will be put to the test in 2017 with expected increases in productivity due to the new enhanced system. The long-term goal remains to decrease SAMA's current reinspection cycle from 40 to 50 years down to 12 years.

On the policies side, SAMA trained all applicable staff on the new residential cost simplification and commercial exterior wall cost simplification processes. As well, a new Residential Benchmark Guide and corresponding training was provided to the staff.

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

In 2016 the agency had a budgeted and actual operational workforce of 144.75 permanent staff.

The operating budget increased \$513,000 (2.9%) to \$18.070 million. In terms of actual revenues, the municipal revenue increased \$364,000 (5.3%) over the 2015 level and the provincial funding remained unchanged. The actual funding party shares for 2016 were 58.4% provincial and 41.6% municipal (59.8% and 40.2% in 2015, respectively).

Actual capital funding party shares for SAMA were \$624,000 from municipalities (unchanged from 2015) and \$612,000 provincial. There were no changes in the levels of capital funding from 2015.

SAMA's workforce has been at same level of full-time equivalent staff for five years (excluding non-permanent staff being funded via four-year TI Program restricted funds). Business process improvements and improvements via the TI Program have created productivity gains that have increased the output per staff member and decreased the cost--per-property of SAMA's service. Change and continual improvement have gradually become part of the agency's workforce culture.

<b>2016 Operating Budget</b>	<b>2016 Budget</b>	<b>2016 Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>	
			<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>REVENUES (000s)</b>				
Provincial - Operating	\$10,545	\$10,238	-\$307	-2.9%
Municipal Requisition	7,238	7,279	41	0.6%
Other Revenue	436	466	30	6.9%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$18,219</b>	<b>\$17,983</b>	<b>-\$236</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES (000s)</b>				
Salaries and Benefits	\$12,911	\$11,975 *	-\$936	-7.2%
Other Expenses	5,159	5,131	-\$28	-0.5%
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$18,070</b>	<b>\$17,106</b>	<b>-\$964</b>	<b>-5.3%</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$149</b>	<b>\$877</b>		
Inter-fund Transfers to Capital Fund	\$0	-\$1,059		
Reserves (Net)	0	218		
Beginning Surplus	0	359		
<b>Ending Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$149</b>	<b>\$395</b>		
<b>Staffing (FTEs)</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>		

\* TI Program salary and benefit costs of \$984,000 are being paid from SAMA operational funding.

# Key Performance Measures

## Delivery of Property Assessment Services

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

#### 1. Annual Maintenance Program

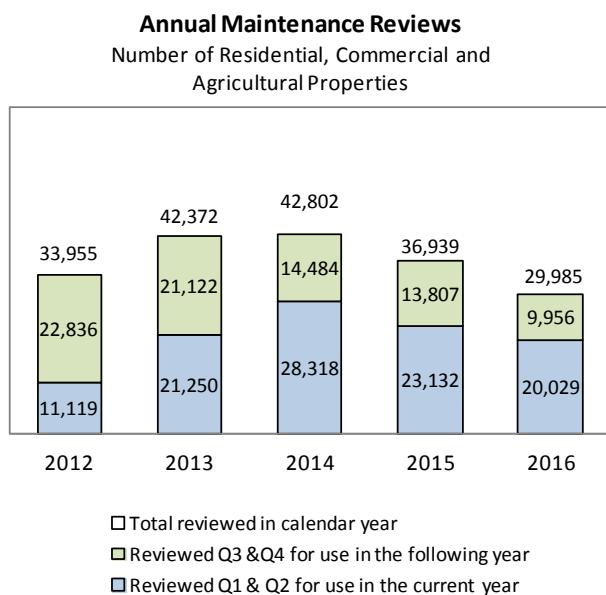
The annual maintenance program reviews and updates all properties with developments or changes that may affect the property’s assessed value. The municipality submits a list of the properties affected, and the agency reviews each identified property and provides the municipality with an updated assessed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

#### The Agency’s Performance

In 2016, the agency reviewed 20,029 properties for use on 2016 municipal assessment rolls, and in Q3 and Q4 the agency reviewed 9,956 properties for use on 2017 municipal assessment rolls.

Annual maintenance reviews were completed on 29,985 residential, commercial and agricultural land properties. The remaining 19,700 properties still expected from municipalities will be reviewed in Q1 and Q2 of 2017.

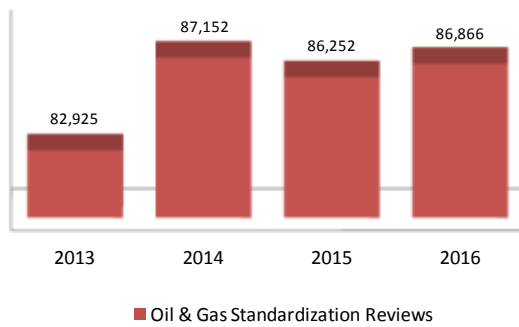
The agency continues to level out the annual maintenance workload by advancing annual maintenance work to the preceding year and works toward spreading the workload more evenly over the last months of the calendar year. This helps the agency to provide more timely delivery of the service to client municipalities.



2016 was the second year of a new maintenance fee-for-service initiative (and the first year capturing a full 12 months of chargeable fees-for-service). Municipalities approve their requested chargeable maintenance lists prior to the work being performed. The number of completed residential, commercial and agricultural maintenance requests increased in 2016 (25,812 up from 17,387 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.

**Annual Maintenance Reviews**  
Number of Oil & Gas Standardization Reviews



The volume of standardized oil and gas annual maintenance (86,866 properties) tends to overshadow the volume of other industrial property assessments. In 2016, the agency also updated 16,080 properties via renditions received from resource companies and reviewed 3,500 properties via the industrial maintenance program.

2016 also included a major project in the industrial division of SAMA. The industrial staff, along with Ministry of Environment officials and SAMA programmers worked to create a new assessment valuation system. This system uses the new Petrinex

database rather than the Ministry's previous (and no longer active) system.

## 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.

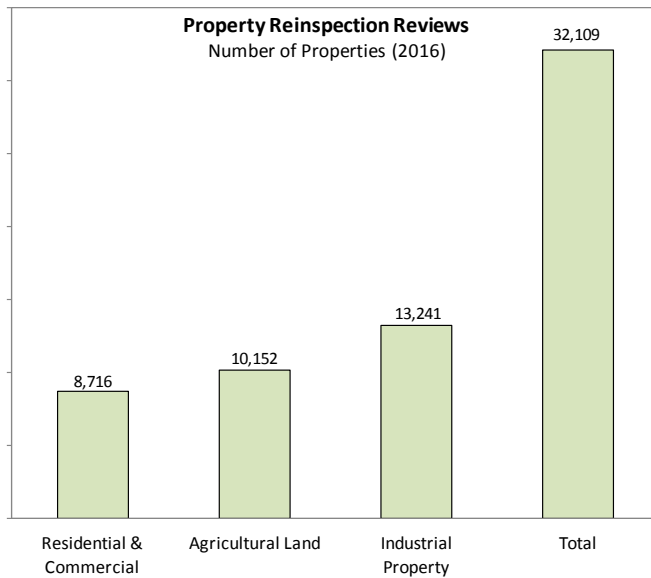
By the end of 2016, the following components of new technology have been introduced:

- more efficient data entry via the "Open Forms" enhancements made to the system, reducing the amount of time to enter property attributes into the Govern system
- an update of the core system to a .net platform - an integral step in being able to implement future upgrades such as data entry via tablet computers, web portal tools and GIS capabilities

As an example, a recalculation of SAMA's entire assessment database used to take 54 hours, but can now be completed in as only 9 hours.

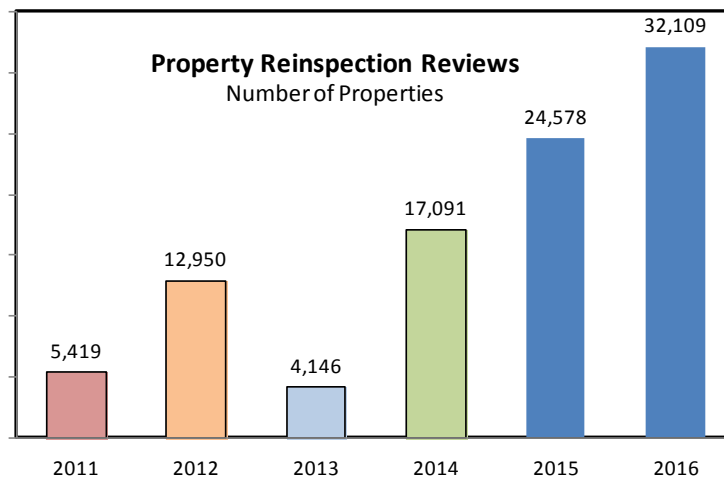
## The Agency's Performance

Despite the demands of regular property maintenance and development of the TI Program, SAMA was able to allocate enough resources to its reinspection program in 2016 that the agency reinspect more properties in 2016 than the prior year (32,109 in 2016 and 24,578 in 2015). The agency reinspected 10,152 agricultural properties in 7 rural municipalities, 8,397 residential inspections and 319 commercial inspections, targeting areas and municipalities where the assessments were estimated to be the furthest out-of-date. As part of the 13,241 industrial re inspections, the agency conducted a flow-line audit project that reinspected 12,635 properties (in addition to the 606 regular industrial re inspections).



SAMA's continual improvement over the past few years is moving the agency in small steps toward its long-term goal of reaching a 12-year cycle. The 2016 reinspection program numbers are close to six times the number of properties reinspected 5 years prior and the 32,105 properties are 38.9% higher than the 23,114 reinspected in 2010 (at which time SAMA's

workforce was 22 FTE's larger).





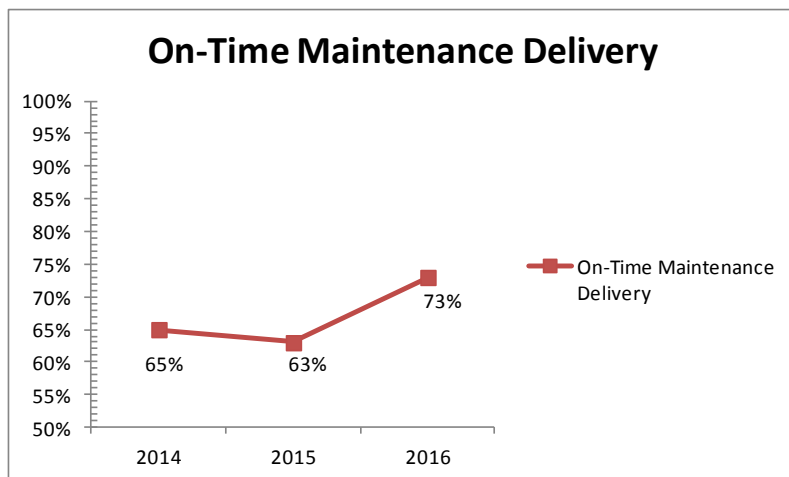
## **KPM #2: On-time delivery of client services**

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 2016 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 on-time 73% of municipalities who requested their 2016 maintenance packages in the first part of 2016 (on-time delivery was 63% in 2015). Due to the 2017 revaluation, no municipalities had their 2017 maintenance delivered by the end of 2016.



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

**\*SAMA conducts a biannual survey. The next survey is scheduled for 2017\***

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 highest number of appeals generally occur in the first year of a revaluation, followed by a reduced level in Years 2, 3 and 4. The 2013 Revaluation involved the revaluation of 818,388 properties (783,011 in 2009), and appeals in 2016 (Year 4) were initiated on 1,989 properties (there were 2,225 appeals in 2015, 1,368 in 2014 and 4,321 in 2013, the most recent revaluation year).

The 1,989 appeals in 2016 represent a decrease over the previous year (236 less than the 2,225 in 2015), although the number resolved by agreement to adjust or that were withdrawn was 1,629 (82.0%). The 1,989 appeals represent an appeal rate of 0.24% (1,989 appeals of the 840,875 properties). Additionally, the value of properties appealed was equal to 1.4% of the property database (803.1M of the 58.1B total database). As a result of appeals, SAMA clients had a 167.7M or 0.28% decrease to taxable assessments (-0.20% in 2015 and -0.33% in 2014).

2016's support of value work involved over 10,000 direct labour hours, representing 6.5 FTE's or approximately 7.6% of SAMA's assessor resources. In the last revaluation cycle (2009 to 2012) there were 5,342 appeals and the number has more than doubled to 11,890 appeals in the current cycle (2013 to 2016). 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. In addition to a general increase, there has also been an increase in appeals to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board when compared to the previous revaluation cycle.

SAMA is mitigating its appeal risk by:

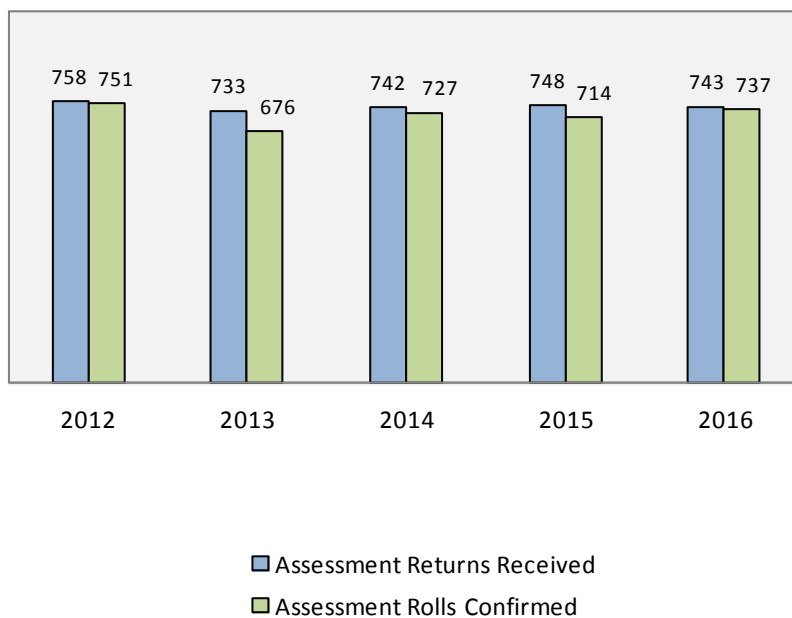
- enhancing defence of value training for staff and improving documentation to explain and support assessment appeal decisions
- working through the SAMA City Assessor group to encourage the Saskatchewan Municipal Board to meet with assessment service providers and applicants to discuss ways to improve the timelines of appeal decisions

## **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 768 municipalities in Saskatchewan in 2016 – 760 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 2016 assessment roll year, 743 (96.7%) of all municipalities had submitted their assessment return by December 31, 2016.

The agency confirmed 737 (99.2%) of the submitted assessment rolls as of December 31, 2016, and 6 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 743 municipal assessment returns received, all 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.

2016 was the third year of SAMA's four year TI Program, which is being implemented in 4 phases throughout the run of the program.

The phases of the program worked on in 2016 include:

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

The completion of phase 1 actually occurred in 2015. It involved an updated user interface to speed up data inputting. Although the development of this phase was a 2015 event, inspections per appraiser continue to increase as staff become more familiar and efficient using the updated software.

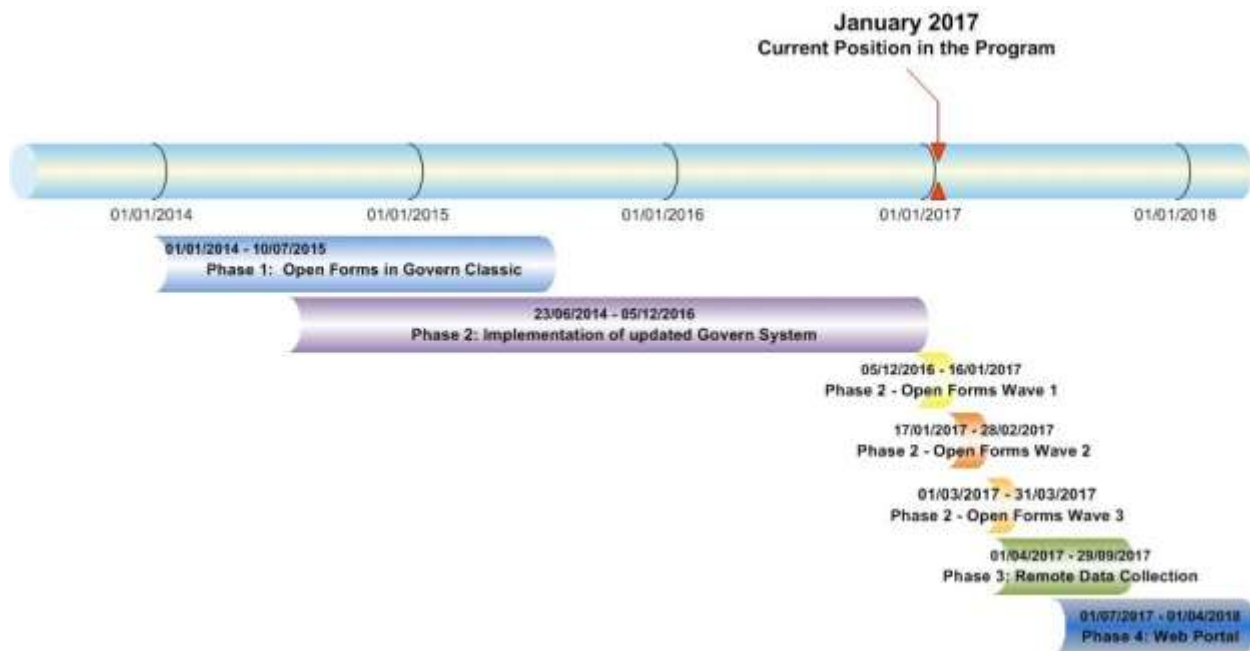
#### **Phase 2: Implementation of updated Govern System**

In phase 1 of the TI Program, SAMA updated the user interface of the Govern computer system. Phase 2 of the TI Program saw 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 3 and 4.

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

SAMA worked with its application service provider, MS Govern, to create and implement the second phase of the program ("Govern 6.1" or Govern.net). Phase 2 created a more robust assessment database that will open the door for future development and is essential for Phase 3 and web portal developments. The "go live" date of Govern 6.1 was delayed several months from the initial plan but was successfully implemented with preliminary 2017 values in December 2016. The program continued to be on budget, with SAMA's total 3-year investment in the program now at \$3.8M and over 19,000 hours of direct information services division and assessment services division labour hours spent on the program in 2016. The benefits of Govern 6.1 will be experienced during the upcoming phases of the program, which include remote data collection and enhanced communication capabilities.

# Technology Infrastructure Program Timeline



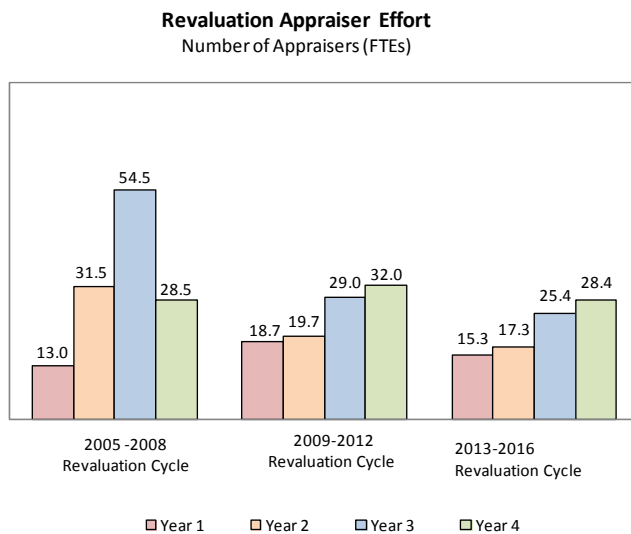
2016 TI Program Budget	2016 Budget	2016 Actual	Variance Amount	Variance %
<b>REVENUES (000s)</b>				
Provincial - Technology Premium*	\$612	\$612	\$0	0.0%
Municipal - Technology Premium	612	624	12	2.0%
<b>Total Technology Development Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,224</b>	<b>\$1,236</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES (000s)</b>				
Phase II of Project - .net Conversion**	1,224	1,835	\$611	49.9%
<b>Total Technology Development Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,224</b>	<b>\$1,835</b>	<b>\$611</b>	<b>49.9%</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>-\$599</b>		
<b>Beginning Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$972</b>		
Inter-fund Transfers to Capital Fund	\$0	\$984		
Reserves (Net)	0	0		
<b>Ending Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,357</b>		

In addition to SAMA's TI Program, the agency also has several other ongoing Business Process Improvements (BPI) in several of the agency's main activities. 27 BPI events were conducted in 2016, most of which were focused on data verification and support of value procedures. BPI events during the year were directly responsible for decreasing backlogs (inventory) of sales verification and increasing the numbers of maintenance packages delivered on time. Because these events are individually-tailored for SAMA's regional offices, overall improvements are difficult to measure but examples include a 50% increase in the portion of maintenance packages delivered on time in the North Battleford office and a

more than two-thirds reduction in sales verification inventory in the Weyburn office.

### Revaluation Program

One of the agency's goals has been to decrease the amount of hours spent on the quadrennial revaluation. 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. 2016 was the final year of the current cycle and years 2013-2016 represented a 13% decrease in employee direct hours compared to the 2009-12 period.



By spending less time on revaluation efforts, SAMA has been able to allocate more time to maintenance, reinspection and support of value activities.

## **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 760 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**

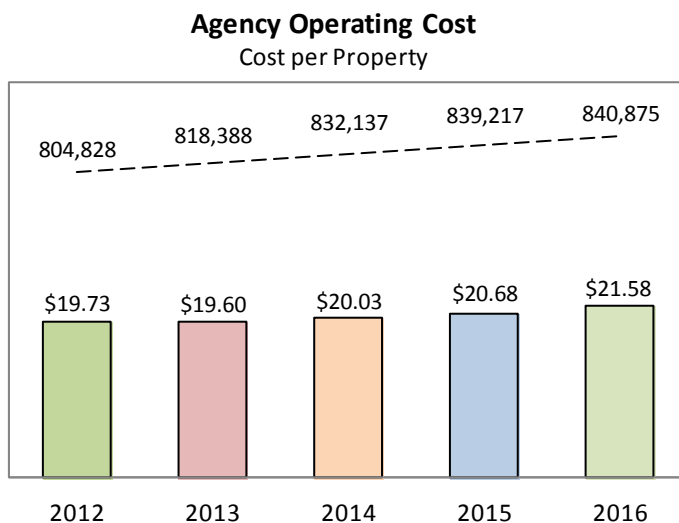
#### **1. Planning and reporting**

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 2016 the agency's operating cost per property rose for the third consecutive year. The 2016 operating cost per property represents a 4.4% increase over the previous year (\$21.58 in 2016 and \$20.68 in 2015).

Delivery of annual maintenance, revaluation and support of value services have been maintained and in many aspects improved over the past several years, while the agency has also concentrated on progressing through the TI Program and mitigating increases to operating costs.



--- No. of Properties



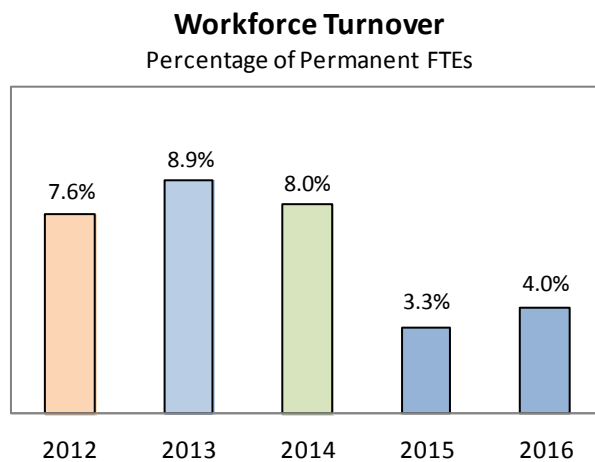
## Workforce Commitment

### **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

In 2016 the voluntary turnover rate at SAMA increased slightly to 4.0% (3.3% in 2015). The turnover rate continues to be below the goal of 5%. SAMA attributes the low turnover rate to a number of initiatives undertaken by the agency that support a high level of employee engagement.



### **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.

The 2015 survey showed 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.

Throughout 2016 the agency progressed on a number of initiatives outlined in the 2015 Employee Engagement Action Plan. These initiatives included enhancements to leadership training and the one-on-one coaching process, additional technical training for staff, deeper staff involvement in project planning, more team-building activities than had been done in the past, completion of the second phase of a new technology program. The most impactful initiative may have in fact been an updated job evaluation and job classification plan for all unionized employees.

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. During 2016, in conjunction with the completion of phase two of the TI Program, SAMA trained all assessment services staff and all other users of the new Govern 6.1 system. This was a very large project that involved a sizeable amount of resources and was met with very positive feedback from those involved.

#### 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 2016, 61.8% or 55 of SAMA's 89 appraisers (65.2% in 2015 and 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).

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 nearly fifteen 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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