Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association Inc.
Representing the interests of irrigation in Saskatchewan through one common voice.

2022 SIPA Highlights

SIPA was established in 1996 and its objectives are to provide:

1. Policy Advocacy for Irrigating Farmers
2. Support for Irrigation Expansion and Development in Saskatchewan
3. Economic and Value-Added Irrigation Research
4. Public Education and Trust Building Opportunity for Saskatchewan Irrigation
5. Member Extension and Networking Opportunities

Highlights of SIPA's activities in 2022 to meet these activities include:

1. Policy Advocacy for Irrigating Farmers

- Having been asked by the Ministry of Finance to provide input into agricultural PST exemptions, SIPA communicated the need for off farm irrigation infrastructure to also be exempt. SIPA continues to work on reporting to the Ministry on the importance of this change.

- SIPA provided input into the Water Security Agency's (WSA's) Agricultural Water Management Mitigation policy, addressing drainage regulation and water body retention. Over a series of consultations, SIPA advocated that irrigation can be a strategy to mitigate downstream drainage impacts and be an important tool to ensure soil health and prevent run-off and erosion.

- SIPA participated in industry engagement sessions on the new Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) programming. SIPA advocated to address several key irrigation barriers in new programming including cost and availability of power, access to information to enable successful transition from tradition crops to high-value (nontraditional) crops under irrigation, access to new crop market knowledge, and public investment in capital infrastructure.

- SIPA spoke on the importance of government investment in irrigation infrastructure to Fraser Tolmie (Federal Conservative MP, Moose Jaw Lake Center Lanigan), Dana Skoropad (Provincial Conservative MLA, Arm River), and to Marie-Claud Bibeau (Federal Agriculture Minister) when she visited Saskatoon on July 20th for the signing of the bilateral agricultural funding agreements between the provinces and the federal government.

- SIPA, advocating on behalf of irrigating farmers, consulted on the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation's (SCIC) Business Risk Management Policy review.

2. Supporting Irrigation Expansion and Development in Saskatchewan

- SIPA, along with other irrigating farmers, continues to work with the Water Security Agency (WSA) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) in a technical working group. The purpose of the group is to help provide producer knowledge and feedback to government on technical aspects of the Westside Irrigation Project's design.

- SIPA met each month in 2022 with WSA and MOA to receive updates on ongoing irrigation project development to share with membership through SIPA quarterly newsletters and communications.

- SIPA and SaskPower formed a joint working group, made up of management from both organizations, designed to be a direct line of communication to discuss issues SIPA members are facing related to SaskPower. In addition to solving project-specific issues, SIPA focused discussion on advocating for increasing the length of time for a shared line rebate, for more transparency in road allowance flexibility and quote itemization, and direct payment from CAP funding to SaskPower, to alleviate cashflow burden for farmers. In the fourth quarter of 2022 SaskPower announced an extension of their shared line rebate from 5 to 10 years. This is the first extension of this length anywhere in Canada. This change is directly tied to this working group's efforts.

- SIPA representant Saskatchewan irrigators in its attendance at the 2022 industry stakeholder budget briefing and budget address at the Saskatchewan legislature.

- SIPA shared aligned efforts with with the Saskatchewan Stock Growers (SSGA) and the Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) who both put forward resolutions in support of irrigation expansion in 2022.

3. Providing Economic and Value-Added Irrigation Research

- SIPA provided an economic impact assessment of the Baildon Irrigation District. This report supported successful negotiations between the Baildon Irrigation District and the city of Moose Jaw for effluent supply, highlighting the considerable economic impact of irrigation in the region.

- Commissioned by the WSA, SIPA provided an analysis, report, and workshop presentation on the economics of two opportunistic irrigation projects in Saskatchewan and a feasibility assessment of expanding this type of drainage mitigation to greater Saskatchewan. This work continues to work to better understand options for potential in other regions.

4. Building Public Education and Trust in Saskatchewan Irrigation

- The objectives of SIPA's public awareness efforts are threefold: (1) share knowledge about irrigated production and how it is regulated and its challenges and impacts on Saskatchewan people and the economy, (2) disseminate research that exists in irrigation and highlight opportunities and (3) and

identify and showcase best stewardship practices in irrigated agriculture to those outside of irrigated agricultural production.

- SIPA completed the first year of its public awareness campaign which included the creation of an "Irrigation Knowledge Report" and media content and presentations to build awareness about the irrigation industry in Saskatchewan.

- In 2022 SIPA presented to the Sierra Club, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association and at the Knowledge Tent at Ag in Motion on these objectives with more presentations to come over the next few months to the public who may not be aware of the importance of irrigation, university students, Chamber of Commerce, RM association, environmental groups, and others.

- SIPA holds positions on the Canadian Water Resource Association (CWRA) board, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Water Council, and the Irrigation Crop Diversification (ICDC) board, continuing efforts to share knowledge about the importance of irrigation.

- SIPA continued to hold a partnership role in the Canadian-Saskatchewan Irrigation Diversification (CSIDC) research program.

5. Providing Member Extension and Networking Opportunities

- SIPA attended and presented at several district general meetings to better understand irrigator concerns.

- At the 2022 Ag in Motion, SIPA successfully coordinated "Irrigation Alley". In this industry showcase SIPA partnered with the Irrigation Crop Diversification Corporation (ICDC), the WSA, the MOA (Crops and Irrigation Branch), and many others to provide collaborative information and resources on irrigation in one location at the show.

- SIPA successfully coordinated two Open Mic sessions with WSA, MOA and SIPA membership to discuss ongoing concerns and to provide updates on irrigation development projects in progress. Important issues like flexible water allocation and availability, challenges with SaskPower, the need for better communication on water management and lake levels and progress on the next CAP framework were also discussed.

- SIPA's 2022 Conference, with the theme of "Sustainability, Innovation and Growth", welcomed the largest attendance and irrigator delegation in SIPA's 27-year history. New features in 2022 included keynote speaker Sheldon Kennedy, a producer panel on irrigator experience in developing irrigation and breakout rooms featuring 18 different presentations from industry, producer, and public organizations.

- SIPA board representative aided with Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) in organizational restructuring activities.

In addition, SIPA has experienced significant organizational growth including:

- Bringing on a full-time executive director and opening an office in Outlook, Saskatchewan.

- The creation of a joint executive working group of ICDC and SIPA executive was formed. The group came together to develop a new logo representing “Irrigation Saskatchewan” and to provide insight to move forward together with an amalgamation.

- Both ICDC and SIPA boards voted unanimously in favor (pending ratification) of (1) incorporating the shared Irrigation Saskatchewan logo to joint efforts to support Saskatchewan Irrigation, (2) moving forward with an amalgamation of ICDC and SIPA and (3) developing a steering committee to help guide the amalgamation.