

## 2009 Annual Report Backgrounder

Here is an overview of some topics and stories from the 2009 annual report that may be of interest.

To protect confidentiality, we did not use people's real names.

### Health

- ◆ Bernard's doctor recommended reversal of a surgical procedure, but policy said that this type of surgery was not covered because it was considered personal and not medically necessary - but he was in constant pain and his doctor said the surgery was medically necessary in his case (page 12-13).
- ◆ Based on a complaint from a woman with breast cancer, Ombudsman Saskatchewan began a review of the management of waiting lists for breast cancer treatment. The office plans to complete the review in 2010 (page 21).

### Business

- ◆ As the owner of a sand and gravel business, Brad wanted to lease a gravel pit that was on Crown land. More than a year later, he still didn't have a lease, but another company who approached the government later had leased three sites in the same area. The government acknowledged that a mistake was made, but three years later, Brad still didn't have the lease he applied for or anything comparable (page 9-10).

### Utilities

- ◆ Brenda lived in a duplex and the power bill was in her name. She was being billed for her power use and the other tenant's, but only Brenda's portion of the bill was being paid. She contacted her landlord and SaskPower to try to correct the situation, but it wasn't easy (pages 16-17).

### Corrections

- ◆ "Overcrowded jails with a lack of programming are a recipe for disaster," the Ombudsman says in the *2009 Annual Report*. Overcrowding in provincial correctional centres continues to be an issue. The new remand unit planned for Saskatoon would have alleviated some of the pressure by reducing overcrowding and freeing up program space. While sound financial management is important, the safety of citizens, including inmates and corrections workers, must also be a high priority (page 7).

### Seniors

- ◆ Barb moved out of a personal care home and should have been reimbursed some of the fees she had pre-paid, but the care home operator refused and the Ministry did not appear to be able to enforce their own rules (page 13-14).
- ◆ Beatrice was living in a provincial housing unit and could not understand why her rent was fluctuating. Despite several attempts to request information from the housing authority manager, she did not get information that made sense to her. In addition, she believed the manager's behaviour was abusive toward her (pages 18-19).

### Justice

- ◆ In 2007, in his *Hearing Back* report, the Ombudsman identified lack of training as an issue for the province's administrative tribunals. In 2009, the office produced a guide to help fill the gap. It is titled *Practice Essentials for Administrative Tribunals* and is also the workbook for a workshop on this subject now offered by the Dispute Resolution Office (pages 21-22).

### Statistics

- ◆ The office received 2,166 complaints within jurisdiction in 2009, similar to 2008 with 2,191.
- ◆ The office made 13 recommendations on individual cases: 10 were accepted, one was partially accepted and two were not accepted.
- ◆ The office conducted nine "Fine Art of Fairness" workshops and made 29 presentations to classrooms, conferences and the general public.