

# Building permits jump in city

## Mild fall weather allowed more projects to start: official

BY CASSANDRA KYLE, THE STARPHOENIX    DECEMBER 8, 2009

A long, mild autumn has left its mark on the city's residential construction industry and contributed to a significant increase in the value of Saskatoon building permits in October.

Alan Thomarat, executive director of the Saskatoon and Region Home Builders' Association, said ideal fall weather allowed homebuilders to take out additional building permits and get started on projects that will last through the winter. Demand for new housing is rising once more, he explained, as inventory built up in 2007 and 2008 was absorbed by the market during the past year.

"I think we were lucky that fall did last as long as it did. We were able to take out more permits and actually get some housing started so that work would carry on through the winter," he said.

"With the actual inventory depleting as it is, we expect that coming into spring we will see that permit levels will continue to increase."

Figures released by Statistics Canada on Monday show the value of building permits in the Saskatoon census metropolitan area (CMA) rose 115.4 per cent between September and October to \$126.8 million from \$58.9 million.

Thomarat said an increase in Saskatoon's commercial building permits during the past few months will lead to another increase in the number of residential permits as workers search for places to live.

"As we see, too, in the high level of increase in commercial permits, that's an indicator of future job growth as well, so there's going to be increased housing demand to satisfy the employment needed for those commercial projects," he said.

Provincially, the federal statistics agency reported the value of building permits rose 96.3 per cent to \$275.6 million from \$140.4 million between September and October.

The value of Saskatchewan's residential building permits rose 19.7 per cent to \$75.6 million from \$63.2 million month-to-month while the province's non-residential building permits rose 158.8 per cent between September and October to \$200 million from \$77.3 million.

The Regina CMA, meanwhile, noted a 184.9 per cent increase in the value of its building permits to \$85.3 million from \$29.9 million between September and October.

Nationally, the value of Canadian building permits rose 18 per cent between September and October to

\$6.1 billion from \$5.2 billion.

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