



10 May 2012

Lloydminster & District Centennial Commemorative Assoc.,
#27 5012 49 St.,
Lloydminster, AB, T9V0K2

Hon. Gerry Ritz,
Member of Parliament,
Battlefords-Lloydminster Constituency

Dear Mr. Ritz:

I write this letter on behalf of the Lloydminster and District Centennial Commemorative Association to express our dismay and disappointment in your government's decision to abolish the National Archival Development Programme (NADP). Our community-based volunteer Association (with 120 members) has worked hard for the past 15 years to establish and operate the Lloydminster Regional Archives (LRA). In that period, we have raised funds and provided the governance for the LRA. We are very proud of the comprehensive collection of historic documents, photographs and electronic images that we have collected, preserved and shared with local and national researchers.

Our volunteers have brought energy and commitment to the conservation and sharing of the history of Northwest Saskatchewan and East Central Alberta. We are, however, amateurs in the archival field. The high standards of preservation, cataloguing and conservation of documents, photographs and electronic images that we have achieved would not have been possible without the advice and support of the professional archivists associated with Libraries and Archives Canada, the Canadian Council of Archives and the affiliated provincial organisations. The recent budget that your government put forward has crippled these organisations and, indirectly, diminished the professional resources available to us in your constituencies.

In particular, we want to bring to your attention the very serious local effect of your government's decision to cancel the NADP. Our Association was advised in the fall of 2011 that the Government had indicated that the NADP funding would be in place for the 2012-13 fiscal year. As such, we spent many days preparing an application for NADP funding that would allow us to undertake a project that would digitise and preserve four years of locally produced news, agriculture, sports and public affairs television programmes. Our project would also have developed a searchable database for all of the programmes. This database would have become part of the national catalogue of historic resources. Our project was vetted and endorsed at the provincial level and had been submitted to Ottawa for final approval.

Imagine our dismay and disappointment when, out of the blue, your government chose to eliminate the NADP!

As your constituents, we appreciate the need for the Government of Canada to be fiscally responsible. We support efforts to increase efficiency in delivering important government services. The elimination of the NADP, however, diminishes an important service and does nothing to increase efficiency. The total cost of NADP was only \$1.7 million per annum. It's elimination will not make a significant contribution to deficit reduction.

NADP funds were provided to local archives such as ours on a 50% cost-sharing basis. In other words, we, in Lloydminster, would have raised half of the cost of our proposed project through charitable donations and local projects. The "seed money", less than \$13 000, that would have been available through the NADP would have yielded a very significant and cost-effective result.

Our proposed project cannot be deferred indefinitely. The videotapes containing the rich chronicle of local events and people are fragile and, in the next few years, will deteriorate and become unplayable thus causing us to lose a "gold mine" of our region's history.

It is well known that your electorate is conservative in nature. We value our cultural and historic heritage and many of us work hard to conserve our historic record for our children. Frankly, we are baffled as to why your government has chosen to frustrate our efforts through the cancellation of the NADP. As noted above, this choice has no economic merit and will jeopardize our important conservation efforts.

Our Board would like to believe that the elimination of the NADP was an oversight on the part of your government. We urge you to correct this error by bringing our concerns to the Caucus table to bring about the reinstatement of NADP funding. Please do not accept any rationalisation of the elimination of the NADP on the grounds that other initiatives in Libraries and Archives Canada will compensate for the loss of the NADP. Such claims are not valid.

On behalf of the Board and membership of the Lloydminster and District Centennial Commemorative Association, I want to thank you for any advocacy that you will advance in reinstating the NADP. We really do want to proceed with our local project and know that archives and volunteers across Canada have similar needs.

Yours truly,

Donald B. Duncan, Ph. D.,
President, LDCCA (Owner/operator of the Lloydminster Regional Archives)

cc. Leon Benoit, M.P.