



SaskWatch

FREE

Consumer Association of Saskatchewan Inc. ISSN 1184-0005 Volume 39 Issue 2 Fall 2023

CASK's New Strategic Plan

Hello *SaskWatch* readers:

The CASK Board would like to share news with you about our new strategic plan that will set our direction for the next five years. Before I talk about the future, it is always good to reflect on our past and look at where we are today.

Past:

CASK grew out of the Consumer Association of Canada (CAC) whose roots date back to the second world war when the cost of food and other consumer goods skyrocketed. Womens` organizations from across Canada united to work with government to control inflation and to provide information to consumers.

After the war, the National Council of Women and the Consumer Branch of the War Time Prices and Trade Board suggested that a permanent consumers association be established. The Consumer Association of Canada was founded in 1947.

The Consumer Association of Canada, including the Saskatchewan Branch, has been instrumental in influencing the development of standards and regulations for consumer products and services across Canada, as well as being a source of reliable information.

The Saskatchewan branch of CAC went on to become the Consumer Association of Saskatchewan (CASK) which was incorporated in 1985.

Present:

The Consumer Association of Saskatchewan (CASK) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-based, organization that represents, informs and advocates on behalf of consumers. CASK is committed to fairness in the marketplace and to improving the quality of life for all Saskatchewan consumers.

We provide information to the public, liaise with government and other organizations, provide input into consultations, answer enquiries and direct consumers to appropriate information and resources.

Future:

In April 2023 the Board held a strategic planning session and we are launching our new strategic plan. We will be closing the CASK office and moving to an online presence; we are also reimagining the *SaskWatch* newsletter. As a result, we say goodbye to Marc Rousseau who has been our office administrator for the last 4 years and Brenda Goldsworthy who has been the *SaskWatch* editor for many years. We wish them well in their future endeavours. Thank you both, for your years of service and commitment to consumer issues.

We updated our vision and mission statements:

Vision: *A voice for Saskatchewan consumers in support of informed decision making.*

Mission: *To inform, educate and advocate for the rights of Saskatchewan consumers.*



CASK Strategic Goals:

To understand and address the needs of Saskatchewan consumers, the CASK Board of Directors has identified a number of strategic goals that will be worked on over the next five-year period. These goals will be reviewed and refined on an annual basis to ensure that progress is being made.

- 1) *Strengthen the human and financial resources of CASK.*
- 2) *Strengthen the presence and public profile of CASK.*
- 3) *Improve the capacity of CASK to better understand and represent the opinions and needs of Saskatchewan consumers.*
- 4) *Identify topics of importance to Saskatchewan consumers that require CASK to focus efforts on related research, communication and/or advocacy.*
- 5) *Improve the ability of CASK to respond to emerging consumer issues in a timely manner.*
- 6) *Build collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations to achieve mutually agreed upon goals.*
- 7) *Expand CASK Board of Directors to improve diversity and provincial representation.*

(continued on page 2)

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CASK's New Strategic Plan ... continued

As we move forward, we will continue to provide information about current consumer issues, assist consumers in finding appropriate information, provide input into consultations, legislative review, and collaborate with other organizations. Most importantly, we will continue to be an effective advocate for the rights of the Saskatchewan consumer.

We are looking for additional board members. If you would like to get involved but do not have time to be on the board, we also need volunteers to work on projects. Writing, computer and social media skills, financial and economics knowledge are priorities.

Please stop by our table at *Spotlight on Seniors*, October 11, to learn more about us and enter our draw. We are always interested in what consumers have to say.

The office telephone number remains the same: (306) 242- 4909 and we can now be reached by text.

Our e-mail remains the same: office.cask@sasktel.net.

Our new address is: PO Box 7344 Main, Saskatoon, S7K4J3.

We are also on Facebook and Instagram.

As you can see, there have been lots of changes in 2023. The Board is excited to get started on the implementation our new strategic plan.

Patricia Lewis, President

From the Editor

March 2008, I produced my very first *SaskWatch*, CASK's quarterly newsletter. Since then, I've produced four issues a year for sixteen years! It's been enlightening, rewarding and extremely worthwhile bringing consumer information to the people of Saskatchewan.

The Board of Directors has recently made the decision to take the Consumer Association of Saskatchewan in a different direction (see **CASK's New Strategic Plan**, page 1), so *SaskWatch* is being discontinued in its current format. As pointed out by the President in the article on the new strategic direction, CASK will continue to provide information about current consumer issues, assist consumers in finding appropriate information, and most importantly, will continue to be an effective advocate for the rights of the Saskatchewan consumer.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and satisfaction of writing, producing and designing *SaskWatch* which has included well over a hundred articles a year with interesting and topical consumer information, facts and food for thought. These past 16 years working on *SaskWatch* seems to have gone by rather quickly. I will definitely miss it.

farewell

It's been a slice!
Brenda Goldsworthy, Editor

Correction: Spring 2023, *Garage Sale Advisory* (page 5).

The legislation governing the sale of second hand products is under the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act, not the Hazardous Product Act, which was repealed in 2011.

Consumer Resources

Canadian Consumer Handbook is intended to help you become a better-informed and more confident consumer. It offers information on a wide range of topics including online shopping, contracts, housing and home renovations, identity theft, and collection agencies to help you build your buying skills. Being a well-informed consumer is key to protecting yourself. Critically examine product and service offerings before purchasing, to make sure there are no unexpected or negative implications. Always remember – if it seems too good to be true ~ it usually is. Along with consumer tips, The Handbook also includes a directory of government and non-government contacts useful to consumers. For more information, or to get your free copy: consumerhandbook.ca.

211 Saskatchewan is a free, confidential service that connects individuals to resources in the province by telephone, text, online chat, or through a searchable website. It offers a database of over 6,000 community, social, non-clinical health, and government services across our province, connecting people to information about: basic human needs (such as housing, food banks, shelter, clothing depots); services of children, youth and families; physical and mental health services; assistance for people with disabilities, seniors and newcomers to Canada; and employment support. When you call or text 2-1-1, or start a web chat session at sk.211.ca, you are connected with a trained Service Navigator, 24/7, that will help determine which services are available and most appropriate to meet your individual needs. Alternatively, you can search for services through their website: <https://sk.211.ca>.

Canadian Anti-fraud Centre (CAFC) is Canada's national anti-fraud call centre and fraud data repository. As of December 31, 2022 there were 90,137 reports of fraud with 56,352 victims losing a total of \$530 million dollars. The call takers are trained anti-fraud specialists who provide advice on the steps that victims should take to recover lost funds and to protect themselves in the future. They also play a crucial role in educating the public about specific fraudulent telemarketing pitches and in collecting and disseminating victim evidence, statistics and documentation, all of which are made available to law enforcement agencies. Check out CAFC's web for a list and description of common scams plus some tips on how to avoid being caught in one. If you're reporting a fraud, start with your local police agency and then contact the CAFC toll free at: 1.888.495-8501 or go to their web: antifraudcentre.com.

The Little Black Book of Scams is a compact, easy-to-use reference guide aimed to increase awareness of the many different kinds of scams targeting Canadians. It provides information on how to recognize scams, how both consumers and businesses can protect themselves, contact information for reporting a scam, and offers a step-by-step guide for victims to reduce their losses and avoid becoming repeat victims. Every year, Canadians lose millions of dollars to scammers who bombard us with online, mail, door-to-door and telephone scams targeting people of all backgrounds, ages and income levels. The best way to fight fraud is to avoid becoming a victim.

Download a free copy at: competitionbureau.gc.ca.
For general enquiries: 1-800-348-5358.

Ombudsman Saskatchewan

Are you having problems with a provincial or municipal government service? *Ombudsman Saskatchewan* says they may be able to help. They takes complaints about provincial government ministries, agencies, crown corporations and most health entities. They also take complaints about Saskatchewan cities, towns, villages, resort villages, rural municipalities, northern municipalities, and municipal council members. If you've tried to resolve a problem and you still think it's unfair, they suggest you make a complaint to their office. Their website: ombudsman.sk.ca has detailed information on how to go about making a complaint or you can phone toll-free: 1-800-667-9787; Regina: 306-787-6211; Saskatoon: 306-933-5500.

NotifyNow. In the event of an emergency caused by extreme weather or a man-made event, whether it's citywide or area specific, *NotifyNow* will contact you with important information on what to do, where to go, and what to expect. You will receive either a voice message to your home, work or cell phone, an email, or a text message depending on your preference. To receive notifications, you must have some form of contact information entered into their database. Sign up at: saskatoon.ca/notifynow or regina.ca/residents/notifynow/. If you don't sign up, you may still be contacted if you have a publicly-available phone number. The *NotifyNow* system is tested twice a year. The cities alert residents with advance notice, prior to sending the scheduled *NotifyNow* test message.

Disaster can strike with little to no notice, so the best way to be ready for any emergency is to have a plan. Public Safety Canada offers valuable information on being prepared: www.getprepared.gc.ca.

Reconciling Convenience with Saving the Environment



by *Donna Slusar*

There are three adults in my household, and despite making the same amount of coffee for us each morning, I find myself throwing out a cup or two or not having made enough. With the added work of cleaning out the coffee pot and filter and composting the coffee grounds, the idea of switching to a single serve coffee maker started to make good sense to me. No more guessing about how much coffee to make and how strong to make it, no more throwing out leftover coffee, and no more time spent cleaning up! But what happens to the used coffee capsules? Do they go in the garbage, can they be recycled, and if there is a recycling program, are they REALLY being recycled?

Making the switch to coffee capsules meant finding a company that not only made good coffee, but had a reliable process in place to recycle. One company that stood out to me was the Swiss-based Nestlé.

While it's great that Nestlé has a process in place to help people recycle their coffee capsules, how can consumers in our province participate when there are no Nespresso retail stores located anywhere in Saskatchewan? Turns out, Nestlé has this covered.

On Nestlé Canada's Nespresso website at <https://nespresso.com> under the "Sustainability and Recycling" and "Recycling Program" tabs, visitors to the site choose their province and enter their postal code, and based on where you live (i.e. urban centres or rural areas, and whether or not Nespresso has a recycling partnership with your recycling company), a two-step process will pop up that shows you how to recycle using a green, red, or black recycling bag provided to you with each Nespresso coffee purchase.

For example, if you live in an urban centre where Nespresso has partnered with a recycling company, you'll receive a "green bag" for your used capsules to be placed in your blue recycling bin for pick-up by your recycling company. If you live in a rural area or urban centre where you don't have recycling or your company hasn't teamed up with Nespresso, you'll receive a "red bag" for your used capsules that can be dropped in any Canada Post mailbox prepaid directly to Nespresso. Having a Nespresso retail store in one of our cities in Saskatchewan would mean filling up a "black bag" with used capsules to take straight to a Nespresso store for recycling, but as I mentioned, there are currently no Nespresso stores in Saskatchewan.

When I entered my province and postal code on Nespresso's website, a green recycling bag popped up with instructions to place the green bag with used coffee capsules in our large blue recycling bin for pick-up by our municipal recycling company. But where does the green bag go from there? What does my local recycling company do with the green bag? Are they tooled to recycle the used coffee capsules themselves?

I called our municipal recycling company and was directed to the manager of their recycling department. When I asked about the Nespresso green bags, I found out that their company didn't recycle the capsules, but that they have teamed up with Nespresso to support its recycling program. Nespresso provides the recycling company with large containers to collect the green bags which are then picked up by Nespresso and shipped to one of three recycling centres in Quebec, Ontario, or British Columbia. These recycling centres have machines that separate the coffee grounds from the aluminum capsules. The coffee grounds are provided free of charge to local farmers to be used as compost, and the aluminum capsules are melted down and re-used either as new Nespresso capsules, or in other products that use aluminum such as bicycle frames.

So, if you're considering making the switch to a single serve coffee maker like Nespresso, there's a lot more information on their website about the company's environmental goals and measures to reduce their carbon footprint. In fact, one of their latest news stories is how they partnered with a bicycle company from Sweden called "Vélosophy" who rolled out bicycles this summer with frames made from 20% aluminum recycled from Nespresso coffee capsules.

After all my research, the decision to switch to a single serve coffee maker made quite a lot of sense to me. The coffee sure is a crowd-pleaser at my house, and knowing that it's eco-conscious makes it taste even better!

(Sources: <http://www.nespresso.com> and <https://nestle-nespresso.com>)