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MEDIA RELEASE

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SASKATCHEWAN JUST GOT SAFER

SASKATOON: This afternoon, more than 150 Saskatchewan business and community leaders, primarily from the NSBA (North Saskatoon Business Association), gathered to signify their commitment to the health and safety of their employees and communities at an historic public signing event. Co-presented by *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* and *Safe Saskatchewan*, this event featured official signings of Saskatchewan's Health & Safety Leadership Charter. Approximately one-third of those in attendance were new signatories to the Health & Safety Leadership Charter, while many others had signed on at the inaugural Charter signing in Regina on June 10, 2010.

"By working together, Saskatchewan business leaders can be instrumental in improving the lives of Saskatchewan people, enhancing the economic environment for business, and saving millions of dollars in health and social costs – one workplace, one community, and one family at a time," says Gord Moker, CEO of *Safe Saskatchewan*.

Signatories of the Charter will reconvene to report on progress, success, and outcomes at an annual Leadership Forum. By signing, the leaders have chosen to be involved in a provincial movement and reap the reward of seeing the improved health and safety of Saskatchewan residents.

"A lot of us don't realize that an injury at home affects us at work, and an injury at work affects us at home. Any injury has a direct impact on the people around us - our family, our co-workers, and our community," explains Peter Federko, CEO of the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board. "That's why *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* and *Safe Saskatchewan* have partnered to create this event, where informed leaders will publicly commit to injury prevention within their organizations and their communities. Our goal is that safety be adopted as a value – not just a priority."

"The NSBA's Board of Directors felt very strongly about the inaugural Health and Safety Leadership Charter event on June 10 in Regina," says Jim Nowakowski, President of the NSBA Board. "Not only were we there to sign it ourselves as an Association, we wanted to do more to raise awareness to this very important issue. That's when we started the wheels in motion to bring this message to Saskatoon, and I'm very proud the way our Membership has responded."

Forty-nine businesses signed on to the Health & Safety Leadership Charter today. This brings the total amount to 73 NSBA Members who are Charter signatories, which accounts for more than 40 per cent of the provincial total.

"The response and commitment that the NSBA membership has for not only this event, but this ongoing initiative, clearly shows that the NSBA is very committed to safety in the workplace and beyond," says Keith Moen, Executive Director for the NSBA. "Being a good business and community leader is more than productivity and the bottom line. It's also about providing a good, safe and smart solution to a problem that has unfortunately been prevalent in our province for a long time."

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Fast Facts:

- Saskatchewan has the second worst workplace time-loss injury record in the country.
- Away from work, Saskatchewan's injury hospitalization rate is twice the national average.
- Unintentional injury means an injury caused by an incident such as a fall, motor vehicle collision, drowning, poisoning, electrocution, etc.
- Saskatchewan's death rate due to unintentional injury is 1.4 times higher than the national average.
- Unintentional injuries have a negative impact on the individual, their family, their workplace and Saskatchewan communities' growth and viability.
- Every year, preventable injuries create a drain of \$1 billion on the provincial economy.

The **NSBA (North Saskatoon Business Association)** is a member-driven and focused organization that serves, promotes and protects business throughout Saskatoon and beyond. Although its origins and roots are in Saskatoon's north end, today it encompasses far more than that. The NSBA has developed its mandate and reputation by being a relevant, topical and effective organization that interacts with all levels of government and industry on a variety of issues for the betterment of our local economy.

Safe Saskatchewan is a provincial consortium of public, private, cooperative and non-profit sector founding partner organizations. The not-for-profit organization aims to raise awareness of the impact of unintentional injuries in Saskatchewan, coordinate provincial injury prevention initiatives, and support all organizations and programs undertaking injury prevention in the province.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan is an injury prevention and workplace safety partnership between the WCB and the Ministry of Labour Relations Workplace Safety (LRWS). Through the partnership, both agencies offer programs and support that help employers and workers develop workplace health and safety programs.

Mission: Zero was founded in 2008 as an initiative to eliminate workplace injuries in Saskatchewan. In 2010, Safe Saskatchewan adopted *Mission: Zero* for its awareness campaign. The intent behind *Mission: Zero* is to bring about faster and deeper reductions to the provincial injury rate. Saskatchewan has the second highest workplace injury rate in Canada, and the highest rate of unintentional injury overall.

