



Privatization in Saskatchewan 2004-2015

A Pocket Timeline

**Saskatchewan Office
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

The following chronology demonstrates both the sheer number and diversity of privatization initiatives that have been undertaken by Saskatchewan governments over the past decade. While the NDP government under Lorne Calvert was not immune to flirtations with privatization, we witness a most pronounced acceleration of the number and type of initiatives under the Saskatchewan Party government.

In what follows, we identify to the best of our ability, all major instances of privatization, public-private partnerships and outsourcing conducted by provincial governments in Saskatchewan over the past 10 years.

For more detailed information on privatization in the province, see our full report “The Wrong Track: A Decade of Privatization in Saskatchewan, 2004 – 2015” available from CCPA Saskatchewan.

LEGEND



Identifies government announcements or legislation regarding privatization



Identifies the total or partial sale of public assets



Identifies formerly public services and/or goods outsourced to the private sector



Identifies public-private partnerships



Identifies provincial election



November 2004

The Saskatchewan legislature, with support from all political parties, passes *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*, which would require a thorough study of any proposed privatization, including an analysis of the costs and benefits. A full report would then be tabled in the legislature and a legislative committee would debate the proposed sale, which could only come into effect after a general election. The legislation only applies to SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SGI, TransGas, STC, SaskWater, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority and the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation.



November 2004

The NDP government spends \$1.1 million to explore the possibility of forming a public-private partnership (P3) to replace its aging forest firefighting air fleet before ultimately discarding the idea.



June 2006

The NDP government allows a private company—Victoria Park Capital—to manage the government's Investment Saskatchewan portfolio known as CIC III consisting of over \$400 million worth of government assets.



August 2007

The NDP government launches its “Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing” advertising campaign that accuses Saskatchewan Party leader Brad Wall of harbouring a hidden privatization agenda.



September 2007

The NDP government sells its \$320 million stake in NewGrade Energy heavy oil upgrader in Regina. Premier Lorne Calvert insists the sale is not “privatization,” because the proceeds of the sale will be used in a newly created public Green Future Fund to combat climate change.



September 2007

Saskatchewan Party leader Brad Wall unequivocally states that “Crowns are not going to be privatized and (subsidiaries) are not going to be wound down,” after Saskatchewan Party MLA Dan D’Autremont makes public comments suggesting a Saskatchewan Party government would wind down Crown-owned subsidiaries that compete with the private sector.



November 2007

Saskatchewan Party wins provincial election.



January 2008

The Saskatchewan Party government creates a provincial public-private partnership (P3) Secretariat with a mandate to review all infrastructure projects over \$25 million to be considered to be built as P3s. After nine months, the government disbands the P3 Secretariat determining there weren’t enough large capital projects in the province to qualify as P3s.



May 2008

SaskTel contracts out some installation service of SaskTel Max and high-speed Internet services in homes to jump.ca.



June 2008

SaskPower initiates a request for proposals for private baseload power generation.



July 2008

The Saskatchewan Party government finalizes the sale of its share of SaskFerco to Norway-based Yara International for \$783 million. Investment Saskatchewan has received more than \$209 million in dividends since its original investment. The province invested \$68.5 million in the company between 1989 and 1993.



October 2008

The Saskatchewan Party government announces its “Saskatchewan First” policy for Crown corporations. The policy will focus the Crowns on investing within Saskatchewan and not out-of-province. Where feasible, existing out-of-province investments will be divested although an exception to this policy will be permitted if the Government determines the investment supports in-province operations.



March 2009

SaskTel outsources its e-mail and conference call services to an out-of-province private company.



April 2009

Saskatchewan Party government announces its plan to sell off 23 Ministry-owned and operated rental cabins at Greenwater Lake Provincial Park.



October 2009

The Saskatchewan Party government releases its “Patient First Review” which advocates for greater private sector participation in healthcare delivery.



October 2009

The Saskatchewan Party government licenses the province’s first private specialty wine stores.



October 2009

To comply with the government’s “Saskatchewan First” policy, SaskTel sells Navigata—which provides voice, data and Internet services. A perennial money-loser, Navigata is sold for a mere \$1.5 million.



November 2009

To comply with the government’s “Saskatchewan First” policy, SaskEnergy sells its 50 percent stake in Heritage Gas—a Nova Scotia-based natural gas distribution business—for \$73.3 million.



November 2009

SaskTel divests its remaining out-of-province holdings in DirectWest Canada in order to comply with the government's "Saskatchewan First" policy.



February 2010

SaskPower announces that Northland Power Inc., a private power producer based in Toronto, has been chosen to provide 261 megawatts (MW) of power to the provincial electrical grid by 2013.



February 2010

The Saskatchewan Party government announces that more than 60 percent of its internal information technology work has been contracted out to private, for-profit companies.



March 2010

The Saskatchewan Party government announces its intention to sell the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN)—a Treasury Board Crown Corporation that specializes in educational television programming in the March Provincial Budget.



May 2010

The Ministry of Health announces a pilot funding project for a 100-bed long-term care facility to be privately built, owned and operated by Amicus Health Care in Saskatoon. The funding arrangement closely resembles the P3 model.



June 2010

Health Minister Don McMorris announces that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region has put out a request for proposals seeking a "third party supplier" that could offer CT services in a publicly funded, private facility starting in 2011.



June 2010

Saskatchewan Party government completes sale of Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN) to Bluepoint Investment Corporation, a privately owned Ontario-based business. Bluepoint will pay \$350,000 for the physical assets and film and video assets of the educational broadcaster.



June 2010

SGI sells its shares in the Charlie Cooke Insurance Agency for \$1,146,162. The sale was to remain in compliance with the out-of-province investment restrictions within the "Saskatchewan First" policy.



July 2010

The Ministry of Health releases its "Third Party Delivery Framework" for the contracting-out of day surgeries and diagnostic imaging to private health providers.



July 2010

The Saskatchewan Party government outsources responsibility for inspecting boilers, pressurized storage tanks, elevators, escalators, and amusement park rides. Government inspectors were transferred to the newly-created Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan (TSASK), a not-for-profit company with a strong industry presence on its board.



August 2010

Omni Surgery Centre—a private clinic—begins taking bookings for patients who are to undergo dental and arthroscopic knee surgery through the provincial government's Saskatchewan Surgical Initiative.



October 2010

The Saskatchewan Party government announces a contract with Saskatoon Surgicentre — a private surgical clinic—to provide publically funded day surgeries.



October 2010

The Saskatchewan Party government merges the Milk Control Board, the government body which had overseen milk testing, with the Dairy Farmers of Saskatchewan to form the industry-run marketing board SaskMilk. Through SaskMilk responsibility for testing milk now rests with the milk industry.



November 2010

DirectWest—a subsidiary of SaskTel—sells off AgDealer, a specialty agricultural equipment publication, for \$1.55 million as part of the “Saskatchewan First” policy.



December 2010

SaskTel sells Saskatoon Square building for \$27.7 million as part of its divestiture of “non-core assets” as identified by the “Saskatchewan First” policy review.



January 2011

SaskTel sells Hospitality Network Canada Inc. (HN) assets to PFM Capital Inc. of Regina for \$36.6 million. The sale of HN complies with the provincial government’s “Saskatchewan First” policy, which requires Crown corporations to divest themselves of assets that are not core to their business.



May 2011

Regina Qu’appelle Health Region (RQHR) begins contracting out 42,500 CT scans to Radiology Associates of Regina.



June 2011

SaskEnergy sells its 30 percent ownership of Gas Sur, a Chilean natural gas company, for \$6 million. The sale is to comply with the “Saskatchewan First” policy.



June 2011

A private company advertises that it is leasing private seasonal campsites in Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. The cost is \$30,000 for a ten-year term. Services like cutting firewood, maintaining hiking trails and cleaning visitors' centres that were once provided by parks staff are being handed to private contractors.



September 2011

SaskEnergy announces the sale of SaskEnergy International's 40 percent interest in Igasamex, a Mexican natural gas distribution company for \$17 million US as part of the Saskatchewan Party government's "Saskatchewan First" policy, in which Crowns are required to sell off their non-core, out-of-province assets.



November 2011

Saskatchewan Party wins provincial election.



February 2012

Saskatoon's privately operated surgical centre—Prairieview Surgical—begins taking patients as part of a three-year contract to perform 7,200 day surgeries per year.



April 2012

The Saskatchewan Party government publicly acknowledges that Ministry of Highways engineering services work is increasingly being contracted out to private consultants and that it plans to shut down the province's public engineering services labs.



October 2012

The Saskatchewan Party government creates a new Treasury Board Crown Corporation—SaskBuilds—which advocates public-private partnership (P3s) procurement approaches for large-scale infrastructure in the province.



November 2012

RQHR signs an extension to its private surgery contract with Surgical Centres Incorporated and a second contract with Aspen Medical Surgery Inc., an Australian-based for-profit clinic.



November 2012

Saskatchewan Party government privatizes Information Services Corporation (ISC), the Crown responsible for registration of land titles as well as personal property and corporations registry functions and certain vital statistics. The government sells 60 percent of ISC for up to \$120 million. While initially not very profitable, in recent years the Crown corporation had returned dividends of \$14 million and \$15.5 million in 2010 and 2011 to the province.



November 2012

The Saskatchewan Party government begins private sale of Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) pasture land that was transferred back to provincial governments.



February 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government announces that all future liquor stores in the province will be privately owned and operated. Premier Brad Wall promises existing public stores will remain publically owned.



May 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government authorizes two new private liquor stores in Regina and two more in Saskatoon.



June 2013

Saskatchewan Party government outsources enforcement and compliance services at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park to Ghost Security.



July 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government announces that the construction of a new long-term care facility in Swift Current will be built using a public-private partnership (P3) model.



July 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government contracts with a private company to undertake highway photo radar enforcement in construction zones.



October 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government announces its intention to use a public-private partnership (P3) model for the construction of nine joint-use Catholic/public elementary schools in Regina, Saskatoon, Martensville and Warman.



November 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government sells its 25 percent interest in the Meadow Lake Oriented Strand Board mill for \$30 million.



December 2013

3S Health signs a 10-year contract with a private Alberta company (K-Bro) to launder the bulk of the province's hospital and health centre linens. Publicly run central laundries in Regina, Prince Albert, Weyburn, Yorkton and Moose Jaw will be replaced with a new privately operated laundry facility in Regina. The deal will cost 350 Saskatchewan people their jobs in publicly operated central laundries by the end of 2015.



December 2013

The Saskatchewan Party government transfers control of livestock brand inspection services from the Ministry of Agriculture to an industry-led, non-profit corporation, Livestock Services of Saskatchewan (LSS) Corporation.



February 2014

Premier Brad Wall suggests that he wants the government to sell both Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw to the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA), but only if provincial NDP Leader Cam Broten supports a change to the provincial law protecting Crown corporations (*The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*).



April 2014

The Saskatchewan Party government announces that four public liquor stores will be privatized in the communities of Langenburg, Ituna, Ponteix and Kerrobert resulting in the termination of 12 unionized workers.



April 2014

The Saskatchewan Party government announces that a new integrated mental health rehabilitation hospital and provincial correctional centre in North Battleford will be built using a public-private partnership (P3) model.



May 2014

The Saskatchewan Party government announces that the construction of the \$1.2 billion Regina bypass project will be built as a public-private partnership (P3). For the first time in provincial history, a private company will be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the highway over a 30-year period.



September 2014

Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region outsources 5,500 MRI scans to Alberta-based Mayfair Diagnostics.



November 2014

The Saskatchewan Government releases its Green Paper, "Future Options for Liquor Retailing in Saskatchewan." The Green Paper asks citizens to consider five retailing options, including partial and full privatization of liquor retailing and distribution in the province.



April 2015

The Saskatchewan Party government announces the expansion of Social Impact Bonds (SIB) to fund social programs. SIB are an alternative financing mechanism that allows private investors to invest and profit from selected social programs.



August 2015

The Saskatchewan Party government privatizes correctional food services to Compass Group Canada for \$8 million per year. More than 60 correctional employees lose their jobs under the government's privatization plan.



November 2015

The Saskatchewan Party government passes new legislation to allow individuals to pay out-of-pocket for private MRIs.



November 2015

The Saskatchewan Party government announces plans to privatize 40 publicly owned liquor stores, and license 12 new private stores, as well as standardize regulations and wholesale prices for all types of liquor retailers. The Saskatchewan Party says changes will be made only if they are re-elected.



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