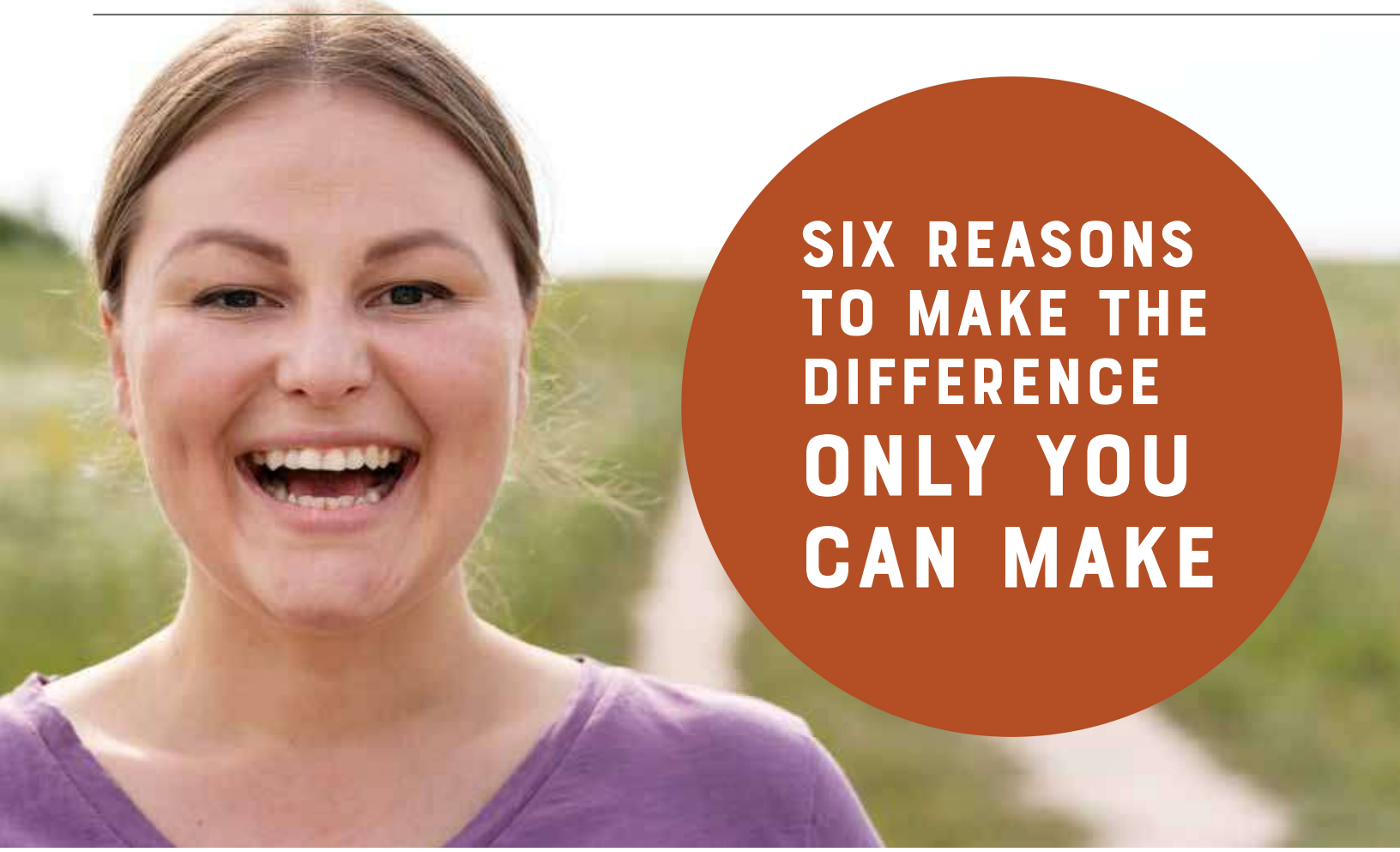

SIX REASONS TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE ONLY YOU CAN MAKE

If you live in rural Saskatchewan, chances are you've met or chatted with a local member of council. That's probably because you also know them as the cattle rancher that lives down the road, or the teacher who taught you in high school, or as one of the hockey moms you see at the arena on Saturday mornings.

But have you ever thought of that councillor as yourself? We're hoping the answer is "Yes." But before you likely follow that "yes" with a "but," consider this: Most of the hesitations people have about running for council have to do with outdated stereotypes and flat-out myths. To help dispel those, here are the facts behind six common misbeliefs that prevent amazing people like you from running for council.

SARM Will Be There to Help!

Once you're elected to council, SARM will always be there to help you with your duties. We have resources such as training programs, webinars, and mentor groups—to name just a few. So remember: **Your wins are our wins, and together we'll make rural Saskatchewan stronger.**

1 "I'M NOT AN EXPERT ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT."

You don't have to be. In fact, what's more important than any expertise is that you care about your community and are willing to learn. A municipality, after all, is the "frontline" level of government, which means it's as much about people and advocacy as it is about policies. Care can't be taught, but the ins and outs of municipal council certainly can.

2 "I DON'T HAVE ANY POLITICAL EXPERIENCE."

That's okay. Chances are you already have a lot of skills and abilities that are transferable to the elected official's role. For example, think about your volunteer experience, community involvement, family life, and any other practical experiences that have taught you how to:

- work as part of a team,
- make decisions,
- look at both sides of an issue,
- prioritize,
- advocate, and
- lead.

3 "I'M MORE OF A LISTENER THAN A TALKER."

Being a good listener is actually one of the most important traits that a councillor could have. Council members are entrusted with making decisions that directly affect the daily lives of residents, families, local business owners, and many others in the community. That trust begins with listening and learning. Other important personality traits are:

- honesty,
- patience,
- empathy,
- trustworthiness,
- curiosity,
- objectivity,
- respectfulness, and
- optimism.

4 "IT SEEMS LIKE A BIG TIME COMMITMENT."

This one's not a myth—but mostly in that being a councillor is a four-year commitment. That said, It's important not to underestimate the amount of time and dedication required to be an effective member of council, especially if you're also managing a full-time job.

The good news is that you're probably already meeting with your community and spending a lot of time thinking about the issues and changes that affect you and your neighbours. When you're a councillor, that time and representation simply become more structured. For example, if elected, you should plan to attend:

- regular and special council meetings,
- committee meetings,
- conferences and conventions,
- seminars and workshops, and
- special events that promote your municipality.

5 "I'M MORE COMMUNITY-MINDED THAN POLITICAL."

Guess what? That sounds like a councillor. Do you love that sense of community and the neighbours-help-neighbours philosophy that's entrenched in rural Saskatchewan? Do you want to see our farmers, ranchers, and entire agriculture sector prosper?

If the answer is "yes," we hope you can also see that Saskatchewan needs community-minded citizens like you to represent your municipality and provide insights that will lead to better services and quality of life for the communities you champion.

Municipal Government 101

- Rural municipalities are governed by a council, consisting of a reeve and councillors who represent a numbered division within the rural municipality.
- That council derives its authority from *The Municipalities Act, The Cities Act,* and *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*.
- Your main role as a council is to make decisions and establish policies about the services that your municipality provides to its citizens, including how those services will be delivered.

6 "IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE I'D FIT IN."

We're pretty sure that's code for: *"I don't see myself represented when I look at local councillors."* Well, that's something we want to change. Representation absolutely matters. As a councillor, your lived experience and unique background are strengths, not weaknesses. So if you don't see councillors that are your age, or gender, or that have your disability or unique point of view, don't let that stop you from seeking election. Saskatchewan needs citizens like you to assume leadership roles and to shine light on the blind spots and opportunities that you see so sharply.

There you have it. Six big myths busted and six great reasons to add your voice to municipal council. To answer more of your questions, including how and when to file your nomination, head to http://www.saskatchewan.ca/ and search for "Running for Municipal Council."

Make the difference only you can make. Run for municipal government!