



***Celebrating Municipal Excellence***

# Nomination Form

***Deadline: 4:00 p.m., Thursday September 18, 2014***

*Please attach all additional pages to this cover sheet when submitting your nomination.*

## Contact Information

Nominee Contact Information	
Name of municipality (ies) being nominated:	RMs of Baildon No. 131, Hillsborough No. 132, Rodgers No. 133, Moose Jaw No. 161, Caron No. 162
Contact Name:	Brent Evans-Chairman Regional Municipal Plaza
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Mailing Address:	c/o #3- 1410 Caribou St. W., Moose Jaw, SK S6H 7S9
E-mail Address:	slim.b@sasktel.net
Name of Nominated Project:	Regional Municipal Plaza
Date Project or Practice Initiated:	May 2012
Date Project or Practice Completed:	May 2014

Nominator Contact Information	
Name:	Mike Wirges and Janna Smith
Organization:	RM of Moose Jaw No. 161
Position:	Administration
Mailing Address:	#3-1410 Caribou St. W., Moose Jaw, SK S6H 7S9
Telephone #:	306-692-3446
E-mail Address:	rm161@sasktel.net

**1. What was the issue that inspired the nominated project or practise?**

The Rural Municipalities of Baildon No. 131, Hillsborough No. 132, Rodgers No. 133, Moose Jaw No. 161 and Caron No. 162 were in a situation where new and/or improved office space was a requirement. Accessibility by rate-payers to the offices proved challenging, especially with regards to parking. Not to mention that a few RM's were faced with the challenge of attracting and retaining qualified Administrators to smaller communities. Based on the fact most of the member municipalities' rate-payers generally visited the City of Moose Jaw on a regular basis, the choice to purchase the building collectively within the city was an obvious choice. Each participating municipality saw this as an opportunity to not only purchase a building together, but also recognized the potential for the municipalities to work collaboratively on future projects.

**2. What has this project or practise done to address the issue?**

5 Rural Municipalities made the decision to purchase the PFRA building by forming a corporation consisting of 2 Directors per Municipality. Only one Director appointed by their council representing their respective RM would only have one vote, while the Chairperson for the Corporation was appointed by the Directors. The name of the Corporation chosen was "Regional Municipal Plaza Inc.", as it best described the collaboration of the municipalities involved.

**3. What was the role of the municipal council and/or municipal staff in this project or practise?**

The participating Rural Municipalities initially formed a committee consisting of two representatives from each RM to determine the feasibility of a jointly owned office. Several committee meetings organized by the Administrators and Councils were arranged throughout the process to ensure all stakeholders were kept up to date on the progress. As this building was owned by the Federal Government, the municipalities were forced to essentially "wait their turn" until a series of steps were taken to first offer the building for sale to TLE groups and Provincial entities. Entire Councils for the municipalities were provided detailed reports on the progress of the sale of the building and patiently began the planning in the event the ownership was forthcoming. This committee led to the formation of the Regional Municipal Plaza Inc., which is a legal entity formed by the 5 member municipalities.

**4. Were other groups involved in developing this project or practise? If so, who were they and what role did they play?**

A significant role was necessary with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture throughout the process. Other Federal Government stakeholders were also consulted to ensure they were aware of the group's interest of the purchase of the building. Tremendous legal consultation was required to determine the implications of setting up a "Corporation" consisting of a group of member-municipalities. Consultations with building appraisers and insurance providers, including SARM to determine the impact of existing policies on "group" assets.

## **5. What resources were involved?**

Other than the financial investments made by the member municipalities, there was a tremendous amount of Human Resources invested in the planning, organizing and implementation of this project. There were not any other “templates” involved that assisted the members/directors as this particular project was the first of its kind. Thorough research and consultation with various experts were required to assist the RM’s with this precedent setting collaboration.

## **6. How was the project or practise developed?**

Initial consultations took place to determine which Rural Municipalities were interested in pursuing this option. All interested Rural Municipalities formed a committee consisting of two representatives from each RM to look into options. The group received notice that a Federal building located in Moose Jaw was going to be up for sale and discussions took place with Federal property management department. The existing building measured 7700 square feet which provided the group with a blank slate with regards to design, construction including additional space to rent out part of the building to other local governments. Preliminary steps were required such as an environmental site assessment, building disclosure report and a third party appraisal. By law the Federal property had to be circulated/offered to other Federal Government entities first, then to TLE Bands, Provincial Government, and finally to Municipal Government. Fortunately all previous groups declined to purchase the building and the group’s offer was accepted by the Federal Government. The group of Municipalities formed a legal corporation named “Regional Municipal Plaza Inc”. The keys to our building were provided on December 3, 2013. The layout/planning of the building including obtaining various building designs took place shortly thereafter. Upon awarding the design contract to Tilbury Designs Ltd., C & S Builders were awarded the construction contract. While the overall layout of the building had been decided upon collectively, each Municipality developed their own layout and floor plan for their individual offices. Renovations began in January 2014 and in May 2014 all owner-municipalities moved into the new offices. Additional renovations continued to reconstruct portions of the building to accommodate rental space. The Village of Tuxford and Resort Village of North Grove as well as the Resort Village of South Lake became official tenants of the Regional Municipal Plaza in June, 2014. The official Grand Opening of the Regional Municipal Plaza took place on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 which included representation and attendance from several delegates including Hon. Jim Reiter-Minister of Government Relations, Hon. Ray Boughen-MP Palliser, Hon. Tom Lukiwski-MP Regina-Lumsden, Mr. Dave Marit- President of SARM, Hon. Greg Lawrence-MLA Moose Jaw Wakamow, Mr. Wayne Black- President of SMHI, Mr. Rodney Schoettler-CEO SMHI, Mayor Deb Higgins- City of Moose Jaw. Proceeds were collected from approximately 175 attendees and rate-payers from a barbeque hosted by the Moose Jaw Fire Department with all donations presented to the fire department’s charity fund. Plans are currently in progress for the development of the remaining 1200 sq. ft. of area in the building with the goal of renting the remaining space by the end of 2014.





**7. What effect did this project or practise have on the community?**

Thus far this venture has proved to be very positive for our community. Specifically we receive a significant amount of positive feedback from rate-payers that own land in a number of municipalities. They indicate the convenience of a “one stop” environment is extremely beneficial. In addition, vendors can now visit several

municipalities in one stop, thus saving time and potentially identifying cost savings for all partnering municipalities. On a smaller scale we have already begun the process of helping each other (i.e. while one office is closed another can help out). The future potential of this collaboration is limitless. For example, there is an opportunity to work together to identify potential cost savings on the following: road construction projects; supplies purchases; dust control savings; group administration training, etc. In addition there is the potential to identify areas that the member municipalities have in common regarding Bylaws (i.e. Enforcement, Zoning, etc) and the ability to discuss common issues and concerns. An incident/situation that perhaps one RM experienced could be shared with the group to prevent “reinventing the wheel” by another RM.

**8. Was a formal evaluation done after the project or practise was completed?**

The evaluation is currently on going by the Directors of the Regional Municipal Plaza Inc., who meet on a monthly basis to discuss existing and long term plans for the new building.

**9. Describe any challenges faced.**

When multiple stakeholders begin the process of working together a number of obstacles tend to arise during the collaboration process. Municipal Governments are no different. In fact, when different local governments collaborate, while there certainly are different dynamics in play, there are also different goals and objectives for each of the councils involved. For example, Municipal Councils are ultimately accountable to their rate payers to ensure they receive the best value for their money. What one municipality may consider as a particular “need” as a necessity, another may consider the “need” as a minor inconvenience and therefore not prepared to forward the necessary capital. While not everyone agreed with every decision made, through a process of honest and sincere negotiation, many challenges the group faced were rectified.

**10. What lessons were learned and what would you recommend doing differently?**

Regarding the lessons learned: Keep the lines of communication open. The group was very fortunate to have a key contact person that worked with the Directors throughout the process. Speaking directly to experts is also key to ensure all avenues are identified before having to back track on bad decisions. This includes involving those most utilizing the spaces in the decision making process regarding the design and layout.