

# Best Practice

## North Valley Intermunicipal Organization

### CONTACT

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### THE PRACTICE

The Rural Municipality of Cupar #218 saw the opportunity and need to partner with neighbouring municipalities to share and enhance local capacity, sustainable development, and economic opportunities in the communities. With the help of the Municipal Capacity Development Program (MCDP), the municipalities developed the North Valley Inter-Municipal Organization (NVIMO).

The North Valley Inter-Municipal Organization (NVIMO) is operating under a Memorandum of Understanding between ten municipalities. (Eleven were nominated for a Saskatchewan Municipal Award):

- RM of Lipton #217
- RM of Cupar #218
- RM of Longlaketon #219
- RM of McKillop #220
- RM of Kellross #247
- RM of Touchwood #248
- Town of Southey
- Town of Cupar
- Village of Lipton
- Village of Markinch
- Village of Earl Grey

They set the vision statement and the mission statement of the organization to address the issue. From there, six priority areas were identified and the goals and objectives for each of those priorities were developed. Once the goals and objectives were set, the action plan was set.

### THE PROCESS

The municipal councils and staff have been the work horses in every step of this project; from identifying a need for the group to developing and implementing the action plans.

MCDP worked with the municipalities providing the knowledge and guidance to develop the group. In March 2011, they provided an introductory presentation of available services to five municipalities. After the initial meeting of four rural municipalities and one town the decision was made to form a group and create a Memorandum of Understanding to govern it. They also wanted to include other stakeholders in the organization and develop a community action plan.

MCPD helped develop a Memorandum of Understanding, a community action plan, and a communication strategy.

NVIMO used various resources on this project such as:

- MCDP;
- Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities;
- Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association;
- Community Planning Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs;
- RCMP;
- Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure;
- Highway Traffic Board;
- Commissionaires Office;
- Community Economic Development Association;
- Tribal Security;
- various pieces of legislation; and
- local councils and community leaders.

## THE RESULTS

The group officially established in June 2011 with a desire to enhance local capacity, sustainable development and economic opportunities. A needs-assessment survey was sent out to the neighbouring municipalities and the results were used to determine the direction of the group. By January 2012, based on the results of the assessment survey, the group had developed a community action plan.

The purposes of the community action plan fall into four parts:

### Part One

- Provide an opportunity for open dialogue and shared experiences from all participants.
- Discuss sustainable planning and its benefits.
- Create a cohesive vision for the future of the communities in the area.

### Part Two

- Discuss global, national and provincial events effecting the local environment.
- Identify commonalities, shared issues, needs, goals and priorities.

### Part Three

- Create action-oriented strategies that align with the mission of the organization and the communities involved to turn challenges into opportunities.
- Provide tools and processes to support each other in planning for the area.

### Part Four

- Evaluate the progress and success achieved as well as adapt the process for future actions.

The group developed a vision statement, mission statement, and values. They then moved on to set six major priorities:

1. Regional cooperation
2. Land-use planning and economic development
3. Road infrastructure and traffic control
4. Shared municipal equipment and human resources
5. Housing
6. Health care

They defined goals and objectives for each of the priorities, and then created an action plan to define how to reach the goals and objectives. The actions were broken down into smaller activities, they assigned a leader, provided resources, and laid down timelines – all these would allow the group to gauge the results.

Since the group's formation, they have met several of their goals and objectives, including the creation of a communication plan. Each year the group creates an annual review reviewing the previous year's accomplishments, and setting steps and timelines for the following year.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- With a long-term vision and a plan the group has learned that urban and rural municipalities can work together and surprisingly, the issues are similar.
- Use the resources that are available to you. Programs such as the Municipal Capacity Development Program are a wealth of knowledge for municipalities.
- We were very fortunate to have things fall into place very well with this program and the group says the only thing they would do differently is start five years earlier.