

Best Practice

Communities in Bloom program participation

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THE PRACTICE

This program was developed to ensure that the community of Assiniboia was appealing to both visitors and residents. The development of Communities in Bloom (CIB) helped to create parameters to follow, which helped to focus efforts. Prior to the creation of this program there were issues with untidy properties, a lack of beautification projects, a lack of environmental stewardship and in general a lack of pride in the community of Assiniboia. The CIB project has encouraged participation from a diverse number of organizations within the community including community groups, churches, other municipalities, private businesses and individuals. The program has resulted in a strong community spirit, which in turn has led to a vibrant, volunteer oriented community.

THE PROCESS

Several steps were involved in the Communities in Bloom Program:

1. Research was done
2. The municipality created a CIB committee and provided a start-up budget.
3. The committee identified a number of projects and developed a budget for these projects
4. Within the first year the committee increased awareness of the program throughout the community. This included increased awareness of businesses, organizations and individuals.

THE RESULTS

Within the first 4 years of participating provincially, the Town of Assiniboia had earned provincial accolades. In 2010, Assiniboia also won a national award for their program at the national CIB convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia. A number of positive outcomes have occurred as a result of this program. These include: increased community spirit, increased community pride, community development, better environmental practices, better stewardship of green spaces (creation of Xeriscape projects), increased citizen engagement, the development of a green space on Main Street and overall general tidiness of the town. The committee also holds seminars in the summer months to educate the public on topics such as Xeriscape projects and composting. The costs and large workload are the only negative aspects of this project.

LESSONS LEARNED

Leadership played a key role in the success of this project, as did citizen communication and engagement. Keeping the public informed allowed them to become more engaged, and increase the potential for success.