

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

Coronach Economic Development Committee

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THE PRACTICE

In January of 2007 the Coronach Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) received funding to hire a part time economic development officer (EDO). Due to the small size and limited budget of the community, it is difficult for council to commit too much time to "secondary services" such as economic development; therefore, an EDO was warranted. The use of the EDO has been a great success for this community. The CEDC has increased its financial viability, and has brought numerous partners to the table, that include local committees, regional entities, government agencies, local and regional businesses and industries, and provincial and national organizations.

The partners within this project have combined to create and sustain a manageable funding pool for economic development. Both the EDO and the Community Planning Coordinator are funded with resource sharing, which makes it more sustainable.

THE PROCESS

There were a number of key steps which took place that led to the success of this project:

1. Create the bylaws and form the subcommittee/organization. These bylaws become part of the partner municipal governments' bylaws, thus making the new entity accountable to the taxpayers through the municipal councils.
2. Secure a group of volunteers who are appointed by the municipal council. Create the new board with representatives from the partners (council reps) and community members at large. Create organizational structure and internal bylaws that govern the board representing the organization. Appoint the executive members of the board (this later will become elected representatives).
3. Create a strategic plan
4. Determine the job description of the EDO and advertise, short list, and hire. The CEDC preferred to do this on a contract basis
5. Prioritize the list of projects and goals, implement and evaluate projects as they arise/complete
6. Determine with the EDO the required education and training
7. Conduct monthly meetings where the EDO and board can work together to share, build and create a more sustainable community through projects, advocacy and media
8. Annually review the strategic plan and use the details to create a sustainable and workable budget
9. Set goals that are achievable and evaluate the goals annually
10. Build a network of partners and include them in your meetings and media
11. Create a communication plan (the community needs to know what you're doing and how to get involved)
12. Review and re-evaluate as needed (or annually)
13. Perform consultations (consult with other organizations or municipalities that have success stories)
14. Networking
 - a. The EDO and CEDC should maintain an up to date list of potential partners and projects.

- b. Make use of social networking, agency websites, etc
15. Resources (it is important to gather and pool resources, share existing infrastructure and build partnerships)

THE RESULTS

Currently the CEDC has an EDO on contract to provide ongoing and sustainable economic development practices for the community. There are also 4 major local projects and 2 major regional projects underway.

Over the past few years, the community has also seen growth. 15 projects have been completed, 10 new businesses have opened in the community, and 30 new employment opportunities were created. There has also provided improved access to training, in-town subsidized daycare, improved access to services (TV, telecommunications, and internet), increased hours of operation at the public library, and an increased focus on shopping locally. 15 non-Coronach partners are also now involved with this initiative, and a tourism project has been started with the Assiniboia Economic Development Corporation. Success stories of the CEDC include:

- The Coronach Early Learning Literacy Centre
- Increased dollars flowing into the community
- Community program coordinator
- Community education forum
- Town beautification
- The "What Not Shop"
- The Prairies Literacy Awareness Centre
- Accommodation assistance for Saskpower
- Website revitalization
- Southeast Regional College Programming
- Computer training
- Small business counseling services
- "Welcome Home" local soldier event
- Outlaw days festival
- Big Muddy tourism and golf course partnership
- Shop local campaign
- Advocacy campaign for rural healthcare
- Engaged volunteers from approximately 40 organizations
- Welcome wagon and newcomer club

LESSONS LEARNED

Communication and co-operation between people, communities and organizations is important, as is dissemination of information to all parties involved.

One of the few drawbacks is having the EDO only on a part time basis. It would be beneficial in the future to upgrade this position to full time.