

Best Practice

Improving the Economy of the Town of LeRoy and the Local Region

CONTACT

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THE ISSUE

The Town of LeRoy set out to actively research, develop, and implement any and all project and activities to improve to economy of the Town of LeRoy and the local region. Council and staff regularly research innovative solutions to improve the local and regional economy. They also seek to improve current practices to encourage the growth and strength of LeRoy and the surrounding area.

THE NEED

The Town needed to develop this practice to keep the community well-functioning and able to retain services and the current standard of living. The main issue making it necessary was the outward migration of the population of the region.

CREATING THE PRACTICE

To help with the design of the practice, the public was asked for the input and opinions in the form of a newsletter, followed by a survey-type questionnaire. Advice from other communities and local economic groups was also sought. Contact was made with various groups that could help assist in achieving the goals of the plan.

APPROVAL

To improve the economy and standard of living, a number of projects/initiatives were taken on. Council initiated the development of a high-speed internet company as a result of being approved for a \$625,000 grant from Industry Canada. Council was approved for a \$488,705 grant from CSIP for a Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, well, and distribution upgrade, as well as funding to upgrade the local arena. Council also approved the Community Promotion Program that offers incentives to rent, purchase, or build a home or business in LeRoy.

Approval for these projects was obtained by researching and applying for grants. Council was prepared for this by having studies completed in a timely manner to coordinate with the grant application process.

CONSULTATION

The Town consulted with residents and business owners in the community prior to proceeding with projects. With advice from other communities and from local economic groups, ideas were formed and contacts were made with organizations to assist with Council's goals.

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the practice, Council was required to "think outside the box" when it came to searching for solutions to local problems. They knew they had to ask the community what their needs and wants were, and to contact various organizations for their assistance. The Town Council and staff took on the task to organize and implement the require work.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Budget

The project funding is ongoing, but each specific had its own budget requirements:

- High Speed Internet - \$625,000 grant from Industry Canada
- Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, Well, and Distribution Upgrade - \$488,705 grant from CSIP
- Assisted in obtaining funding of \$5,000 from Community Initiatives Fund for youth activities
- Upgrading the Local Arena - \$21,000 grant from Canada Celebrates Saskatchewan, \$15,472 grant from CIF Program Centennial Facilities Grant Program
- Rental/purchasing/building incentives for homes and businesses in LeRoy

Ongoing costs include:

- The Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, Well, and Distribution Upgrade requires operational costs and revenue from the utility operations are used to fund the remainder of the loan.
- Council donates the use of a building for youth activities.
- Council continually funds the promotion program costing approximately \$625 per approval

Staff

The project requires some staff resources. An engineer was contracted for the Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, Well, and Distribution Upgrade, but most projects are part of normal staff duties or are completed through volunteers in the community.

Infrastructure

Capital costs for this project include:

- High Speed Internet - \$625,000
- Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, Well, and Distribution Upgrade - \$733,058
- Rink Upgrade - \$62,888

EVALUATION

Many benefits have been felt by the Town of LeRoy because of the various projects undertaken.

- High-quality, reliable water for residents because of the water treatment plant conversion. Rural farmers are also receiving this quality water.
- Wireless high-speed internet project has grown to 500 subscribers.
- Obtained funding for the arena upgrade
- Obtained funding to assist youth
- The practice is an integral part of the QPEDA that is researching economic development opportunities in the areas of Ethanol and Bio-Diesel
- Development of a website for the Town of LeRoy
- Implemented the Community Promotion Program

A challenge that the council still faces is the continual evaluation of the projects to ensure they are still viable and are benefiting the ratepayers.

LESSONS LEARNED

Through this process, the municipality learned that a positive attitude helps when implemented changes in a community. Determination, research, and cooperation are necessary for the success of change. Since mid-2004, 25 new families have moved to LeRoy, as well as some new businesses. Communities are working together to benefit the entire region, and attitudes are changing. Residents and business owners are looking towards the future with optimism.