

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

Enhanced Protective Services

CONTACT

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Project Date: January 2000 (ongoing)

THE PRACTICE

The RM of Fox Valley and the Village of Fox Valley had an agreement in regards to fire protection and maintenance of a volunteer fire brigade. This agreement was minimal in providing services with administration being primarily under the village jurisdiction.

With recent natural gas resource development in the area, traffic, accidents, public emergencies and the risk of fire have all increased. Local residents expressed concern for better protective services, specifically involving equipment and administration.

THE PROCESS

Council members visited town office and fire hall facilities in the province and put plans together for a building to serve the current and future needs of the area. Ratepayers were invited to view building plans. The RM Council suggested to the village that the RM would be interested in taking the leadership role in developing a more viable volunteer fire brigade and emergency services.

The Village of Fox Valley donated the property to construct a modern municipal office and fire hall in the centre of the village. Construction of the building was completed in the spring of 2000. The town office and fire hall facility was built to standards that would serve as an ideal place to designate as a command centre and emergency shelter.

The RM purchased a new fire truck at a cost of approximately \$160,000. Construction of the town office and fire hall cost approximately \$260,000. The fire chief is a jointly funded position between the RM and the village.

THE RESULTS

Emergency response times and fire fighting capability have improved significantly since the enhanced protective services agreement has been updated. The RM of Fox Valley has ongoing evaluations of their service by having the fire chief report monthly to council. Improving equipment and machinery has also resulted in a greater interest shown by local residents in becoming volunteer fire fighters.

LESSONS LEARNED

The RM learned that if council demonstrates leadership in improving service delivery to local ratepayers, volunteers will follow. We have seen a significant increase in residents who are interested in becoming volunteer fire fighters and involved in other community organizations that help improve the health and safety of our community.