

Best Practice

Inter-municipal Co-operation

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THE PRACTICE

The City of Estevan and the RM of Estevan created a RM/City liaison committee to improve the relationship between the two municipalities. After municipal elections, new councils realized that the City and RM could work to understand the concerns/needs of the other and work together to achieve growth.

THE PROCESS

The municipalities realized that past economic booms did not result in significant growth due in part to insufficient planning and co-operation. In order to fix the relationship between the two municipalities, the City of Estevan and the RM of Estevan agreed to the development of a RM/City Liaison Committee which meets regularly to resolve local concerns. The Committee also determines rural contributions to city services used by rural rate payers by consulting with rate payers from both municipalities. A joint economic development officer has also been hired to pursue any growth opportunities for the region.

THE RESULTS

The benefits of an improved working relationship include the RM purchasing of three fire vehicles for the City of Estevan specifically suited to rural needs. A formal agreement exists where the RM pays the City of Estevan a fixed rate to provide fire services throughout the RM. In addition, a solution to water supply issues in both municipalities has been worked out to the benefit of all rate payers.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson learned by the RM and City of Estevan has been that the past must remain just that – the past. Much more can be achieved through co-operation rather than competition. Overcoming past difficulties and issues of mutual distrust takes a lot of time and effort, but if it can be achieved, the benefits to everyone are extraordinary. Efficiencies created by working together and supporting programs and services of each other far surpassed alternative of working alone and providing the same services.