

Town of Bengough
Beautify Bengough Committee

When was the project initiated and by whom:

In 2005, we formed a small community stewardship group called “ Beautify Bengough.” This was a 10 member group of women who had decided that they would improve the aesthetics and environmental health in the town of Bengough.

External funding:

We applied for and received a “Green Grant” from “ Home Depot & Evergreen, Rebuilding Nature“, consisting of cash in the amount of \$2000.00 and Home Depot gift certificates of \$1500.00.

Regulatory obstacles:

None

Council/Community buy-in:

We formulated a proposal to the town council including a statement of goals, objectives, actual proposal, and comments.

By word of mouth we informed the community of the first step in our project which was to relocate and re-establish our local tree nursery.

We placed in our news column of the local paper the news of receiving our Home Depot grant. This article was picked up by some of the nearby newspapers as well.

Our proposal was as follows:

Goals:

To promote, support, and sustain a neat, healthy, greener, and attractive town of Bengough. To encourage the general populace of the town of Bengough, a positive attitude of pride in our community and surrounding area.

Objectives:

To promote a progressive and positive attitude that would make it acceptable only to live in a cleaner, greener, well maintained environment in the Town of Bengough guided by the Beautify Bengough Community Stewardship Committee .

To preserve the comfortable, healthy clean and attractive town we will have attained, through ongoing co-operative planning and working together with all citizens of our community.

To bring public awareness of Bengough’s progressive attitude through wise media use, word of mouth and presentation of a healthy, greener, visually pleasing, inviting environment.

In order to attain our goals and objectives, the Beautify Bengough Community Stewardship Committee carried out their first project in the years 2005/2006.

- relocated trees from current abandoned nursery to various part of town.
- established new 100 tree nursery and maintained/monitored same project on an ongoing

basis.

- established a project which makes our town a healthier, cleaner, safer, and more beautiful place in which to live.
- provided an opportunity for community citizens to participate in volunteer projects and promote in them a sense of pride and ownership in their accomplishments

Activities undertaken:

We and volunteers moved thirty-seven , mature five - seven foot green ash trees out of area formerly known as the Town of Bengough tree nursery and transplanted them in various town areas. We started a project which would help us to maintain these trees and the beautification of our environment long into the future.

Our group held 2 open visioning sessions. These sessions resulted in some wonderful ideas, such as planting trees, holding community cleanup bees, providing beautification of our downtown area and many more. We were quickly realizing that the community would be supportive of many endeavours into the future.

The Town donated to our stewardship group, a 50 x 100 foot property with a house on it.

With this property in hand, we immediately ordered, received and planted 125 green ash seedlings and 12 woods roses shrub seedlings from the Shand Power station greenhouse in Estevan. We organized volunteer groups to maintain and monitor the growth of the newly planted native ash trees of which every single one flourished under their watchful eyes and care. We held a cleanup bee of our railroad property which had been an eyesore for years. We received tremendous volunteer support and it seemed to provide just the exposure we needed to establish ourselves as a serious responsible stewardship group. Our town was already starting to look better at very little cash cost to the anyone for the improvement.

The citizens were now looking into a future where we could replace, when we have to, our current wonderful huge old oak, elm, poplar and maple trees which have graced our boulevards for many decades. As well we will be adding more trees to our boulevards.

These volunteer opportunities have given the community such a sense of pride and feeling of ownership. It seemed to have changed attitudes from a “ho-hum” to a “YES, WE DID THIS” attitude.

The local Co-op donated to the Beautify Bengough Community Stewardship committee a 1979 van. We purchased a tank and pump which we attached to the van, so that we could carry out our watering program.

The Town of Bengough donates all the required water for our projects. They also donate the use of their rototiller.

The Town of Bengough and surrounding RM # 40 donates \$500.00 to us on an annual basis.

In 2006, the Beautify Bengough group held a very successful yard contest. This was one of our promotion events which encourages citizens to have pride in the community as well as enticing them to try new ideas. We had multiple sectors of judgement in our contest, not just focusing on beauty, but as well on conservation of the environment.

Addendum:

Our complete achievement of our first project goals were not completely met by the end of 2006. We still did not have a sustainable ongoing method to carry on financially. After holding more visioning sessions, we arrived at the idea of a small greenhouse business. The Town and RM # 40 assisted us to reach this goal. They donated monies to convert the house on the nursery property to a greenhouse. A very generous private citizen donated windows to convert the entire south end of the house to glass. We installed a commercial fan, built shelving and completed all the renovations necessary. All labour was carried out by volunteers.

In 2007 and 2008, we sold enough plants out of our greenhouse to generate income to maintain all of our trees, in and out of nursery.

A local business in town helps us to sell our plants in the spring. This gives us a much greater exposure to the public.

October 2008: We have had 100% survival rate of all 100 trees. They range from 3-5 feet tall and are ready to transplant in the spring of 2009

Lessons learned:

1. To be successful with a sustainable project you must have complete buy-in of all the stakeholders including the local governing boards and community.
2. With a little determination and fortitude a small group can initiate actions which result in a difference long into the future.