

# 3rd Annual Municipal Innovations Award

All municipalities have experienced change since incorporation. For some, this change has meant continued growth and prosperity. For others, change has meant new approaches are needed for long-term sustainability. For this reason, the AMM in consultation with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, developed the *Tools For Change* toolkit to help officials assess the health of their municipality and look at ways of improving how they do business.

The Municipal Innovations Award given out for the third year at this year's Municipal Officials Seminar is part of the *Tools For Change* initiative and is designed to recognize excellence in municipal practices that improve governance, administration, service delivery, or inter-municipal cooperation. Submissions were evaluated based on a number of criteria, including complexity and creativity, overall impact, community support, and regional cooperation.

This year's award goes to the **Municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain**.

"The panel had a difficult task, with a number of excellent entries that all deserve commendation," said AMM President **Ron Bell**. "What ultimately worked in the of Killarney-Turtle Mountain's favour was the complexity of their project – it involved an actual change to the *Municipal Act*."

That change means that the *Municipal Act* now allows different rates of taxation within one municipality, something Killarney-Turtle Mountain residents were concerned with prior to the amalgamation. "We heard over and over that the rural areas did not want to pay for services in urban areas, and vice versa," explained CAO **Jim Dowsett**. "Once that changed, we could proceed with the full support of our ratepayers."

## Background

The Town of Killarney and RM of Turtle Mountain have, for some time, looked for ways to work together to maintain effective service delivery in a cost-efficient manner. A strong relationship between the two led to an exploration of restructuring opportunities. Issues related to financial stability, long-term



The entire Municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain Council was on hand to receive the 2007 Municipal Innovation Award. (L-R) AMM President Ron Bell, Councillor Lorne Whitelock, Mayor Brian Moore, Councillor Gerry Blixhavn, Councillor Dwight King, Councillor Peter Heide, Assistant Administrator Joan Kemp, CAO Jim Dowsett, Councillor Gwen Tripp, and Councillor Randy Hodge

viability, community development, economic development and operation efficiencies were seen as advantages to amalgamation. Council representation and taxation were seen as problem areas that needed to be addressed before any decisions could be made at the community level. Addressing these priorities showed the councils that the taxation issue would be difficult to overcome under the current *Planning Act*.

With assistance from other orders of government, *The Municipal Act s.52(1)ii* was modified to ensure that equitable taxation would be possible for urban and rural residents. This change, along with many other decisions regarding representation and services, allowed the Town of Killarney and RM of Turtle Mountain to officially become the Municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain on January 1, 2007.

**Laurie Davidson**, Assistant Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, said the amalgamation was complex. "They had to find solutions to a number of issues," she said. "The communities managed the process very well through a solid plan and public participation/communication process."

Davidson noted that this was not the first attempt at amalgamation for the Town and RM. "After a previous attempt, the communities worked at solidifying their relationship and increasing the number of services they shared," she explained. "The amalgamation is a true success in that the communities are satisfied and plans are being made for the future as one stronger municipality."

In his acceptance speech, Mayor **Brian Moore** also suggested that the use of differential mill rates is what allowed the amalgamation to proceed. "We thank the Province for allowing the different mill rates. That is what allowed us to do this," he said. Moore also noted the timing couldn't be better. "This summer marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town and the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RM. What a great time to join together!"

And, while the Municipality is pleased to be this year's Municipal Innovation Award winner, Moore was quick to point out that their journey is just beginning. "An amalgamation is a work in progress," he explained, "and we have a long road ahead with many challenges. Our council has never felt that the status quo is good enough for our community. If we aren't looking for ways to improve how we deliver services, then we are falling behind."

To view the Municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain's complete submission, as well as the submissions from the other finalists, visit the AMM website at [http://www.amm.mb.ca/res\\_tools.html](http://www.amm.mb.ca/res_tools.html). 📎

*The Leader* will be following up on the Killarney-Turtle Mountain experience in our three-part series 'Anatomy of an Amalgamation,' which premiered in the last issue. Look for the next instalment in the Summer 2007 issue, published at the end of July.

## 2007 Municipal Innovations Award Finalists

*There were four other excellent submissions for the 2007 Municipal Innovations Award:*

### Better Municipal Business Practices

#### Rural Municipality of Wallace

##### *Water Supply Expansion Project*

Finding a reliable water supply is a challenge for many rural municipalities. In 2003, the RM of Wallace surveyed their residents and found that approximately 75 per cent were unsatisfied with either their water quality or quantity. This spurred the Council of the RM of Wallace to search for a solution to their water problems in order to secure future economic growth and development. First, the RM partnered with the Federal and Provincial Governments to formulate a plan that would produce long-term results. The project was completed in phases allowing residents to take advantage of the cost-shared approach through Federal and Provincial infrastructure funding programs. Residents were kept informed of the progress of the project, and in August 2003 a secure and reliable water supply was found in a neighbouring rural municipality. With support from the RM of Miniota Council and the Water Services Board, the RM Council proceeded to design and tender the project. Construction on this \$3 M project progressed between 2004 and 2006. This project will reduce costs for residents and will increase opportunities for commercial, industrial and residential developments.

#### Town of Russell

##### *Tax Increment Financing*

In 2005, various groups approached The Town of Russell Council to support a number of projects, including Main Street lighting, Main Street streetscaping, heritage building restoration, museum creation, and development of a multi-use facility. The Council recog-

nized that all the proposed revitalization projects would require financial and human resources and the support of various orders of government. Rather than attempt to contribute to each project individually, the Council encouraged the stakeholders to coordinate their efforts into a long-term vision. This vision evolved into a single revitalization strategy estimated to cost between \$6 M and \$10 M. In order to generate revenue for this project, the Town of Russell Council created a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Zone. The TIF zone was established through regulations in The Municipal Act and revenues will be used to levy funding from private and government sectors. Although the revitalization project is still in its preliminary stages the Town of Russell Council believes that it will result in a number of positive spin-offs including economic benefits and community involvement.

#### City of Dauphin and Rural Municipality of Dauphin

##### *Energy Efficient*

##### *Multi-Event Community Arena*

Across Canada there is an increasing demand for energy efficient buildings. The City and RM of Dauphin have coordinated their efforts to plan and construct a multi-event community arena facility that focuses on state of the art energy efficient technology. The new facility is connected to the existing recreation complex (which houses a wave pool, banquet facilities and curling rink) and utilizes numerous environmentally friendly innovations such as high efficiency lights, R28 insulation, Arena Shield and water efficient fixtures. The main innovation, however, is a refrigeration and heat reclamation system that collects and recycles the heat energy used to maintain the ice surfaces in the arena and curling rink for heat requirements for the rest of the building. This system decreases the time required to make ice while providing heat throughout the entire complex, removing the need for additional heating systems. By implementing energy efficient technology the City of Dauphin and RM of

Dauphin produced a quality facility with a potential reduction of \$75,000 in operating costs annually, as well as a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

### Service Sharing Agreements

#### Town of Grandview and Rural Municipality of Grandview

##### *Shared Municipal Office*

The Town of Grandview and RM of Grandview have faced numerous challenges as a small town and farming community respectively. The Councils of the Town of Grandview and RM of Grandview recognized the importance of being efficient in the delivery of services to local residents. Currently services that are shared on a 50:50 basis include: cemetery, library, recreation services, waste disposal site, recycling depot, physician recruitment initiatives, physician housing incentives, ambulance services, fire protection and emergency measures. These have been coordinated through occasional joint council meetings and formal agreements. In 2004 the Town of Grandview and RM of Grandview agreed to share office space through the purchase of a building. Numerous issues were initially discussed prior to this move including the amount of space required, private and shared space, confidentiality and privacy, noise level, office traffic and public acceptance. These discussions showed that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, and to this end the quality of service offered by both the Town of Grandview and RM of Grandview have improved.

What is **your** municipality doing? Let us know! Submit your innovative municipal ideas to the AMM as part of the Tools for Change program.

Watch for application forms to be sent out in January 2008 for the **4th Annual Municipal Innovations Award** that will be given out at MOS 2008 in Brandon.