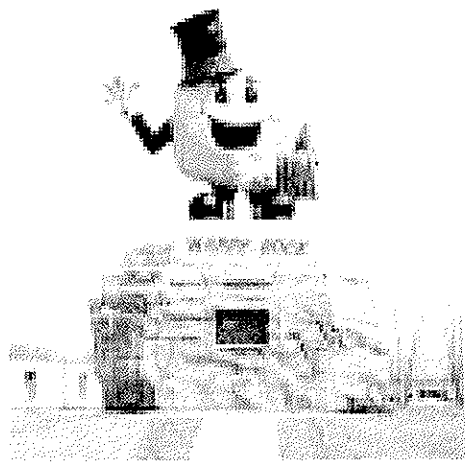


# Building A Sustainable Community

Submitted by the  
Town of Gladstone



**2010**

**ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES**

**MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**

**SUBMISSION**

**BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

Manitoba is facing a new challenge that will put additional responsibilities on our municipalities. Over the next twenty years the senior population is expected to increase by 43%. Many communities are already facing a shortage of affordable housing options and this will increase as our seniors' housing requirements change. We are seeing an increased waiting time for placement in long term care facilities and our acute care beds are a "warehousing of seniors" waiting placement; our health care system will be more stressed than ever. As people are living longer, we will need additional staff for home care and other programs so our residents can stay in their own community and homes for a longer time.

We will very soon be experiencing a "Tsunami of Seniors".

**Who will accept the responsibility to address these challenges facing  
Manitoba Municipalities?**

When elected in 2006, our new council was concerned that our community, like so many rural Manitoba municipalities, had a declining population, had lost several major businesses and was experiencing diminishing healthcare services. Our residents had lost faith in their community. People were moving to larger centres and home values were decreasing. Council was restricted by the loss of tax dollars to fulfill the increasing infrastructure upgrades so desperately required. Council felt the only solution was to increase our tax base and that would not be an easy task. Residents in Gladstone were frustrated and no longer willing to invest in their community; many were leaving and others felt there was no hope for future development. In February 2007, Gladstone was selected as one of the first ten communities in Manitoba to be designated "Age Friendly".

The Manitoba Age Friendly Initiative supports seniors leading active, socially engaged, independent lives that contribute to healthy aging. Council also acknowledged that we needed the younger generation to provide services for our seniors to enable them to age with dignity in our community. A committee of dedicated stakeholders was formed to provide insight into the towns' strengths and weaknesses and initiate the steps required to rebuild our community.

The changes came about more quickly than we could have anticipated. Within two years, Gladstone has 2 new multi-unit housing facilities, increased communication of community events and public information, incorporated upgrades within our Senior Centre to meet accessibility issues, and increased awareness of health services within the community. A new residential housing development is underway, another housing facility is scheduled for construction this spring; we have an increase in population of approximately 10%, intergenerational activities are happening, and we have experienced 8 million dollars of commercial development. With a substantial increase in our assessment, we are able to meet the necessary infrastructure upgrades and services that will enhance the lives of our residents. Overall, the positive changes have stemmed from a desire to make the community the best it could be, with benefits enjoyed by all ages and abilities. The residents of Gladstone are once again optimistic about a sustainable future of their community and are engaged in working together to continue this positive change.

Throughout our Age Friendly journey of revitalization we have been recognized by other communities in Manitoba and also other provinces for our successes. Members of our Age Friendly Committee are being used as a resource

and asked to do presentations in other municipalities highlighting our best practices and outlining the steps we have taken to reach our goals. This sharing of information has extended to other provinces where we have been invited to do presentations at Age Friendly workshops.

Gladstone is proof that small communities on a downward trend can once again become progressive business centres and provide healthy, sustainable living environments for future generations.