

Successful Municipal Practices: Responding to New Challenges



Tools for Change

BETTER MUNICIPAL BUSINESS PRACTICE: Energy Efficient Multi-Event Community Arena The City and the RM of Dauphin

The City of Dauphin and the Rural Municipality (RM) of Dauphin, situated in the Parkland region between Riding Mountain National Park and Duck Mountain Provincial Park, are home to a combined population of over 10,000 residents.

The Parkland Recreation Complex, located in the City of Dauphin, was built as a community project in 1996, and serves as a recreational centre for the entire region. The original project costs were shared by the City and the RM of Dauphin on a per capita basis, 78% City and 22% RM. The complex offers six curling rinks, an indoor pool with a waterslide and wave machine as well as offices and a banquet hall. In 2002 the City and RM councils agreed to look into expanding the facility further and adding an energy efficient multi-event community arena. This new community arena would replace the existing arena built in 1952 and more efficiently meet the growing needs of the community.

Like the recreation complex, the arena project was cost shared on a per capita basis and spearheaded by a citizen committee. The committee was comprised of representatives from the business community, facility user groups, the joint recreation commission and representatives from the two councils. This committee approach provided the municipal councils with valuable input on the project proposal from broad and varying community interests and perspectives. To keep the project focused and to meet the needs of the community, the committee established five key objectives. These included:

- ensuring community support and involvement in the entire process.
- ensuring municipal support and leadership.
- constructing an energy efficient, environmentally-friendly facility capable of accommodating a wide variety of events.
- reducing energy consumption.
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The project was spearheaded by a citizen committee with representatives from the business community, facility group users and the joint recreation commission.

The committee understood the importance of community support and involvement in the entire process.

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More than just bricks and mortar, the old arena was a focal point and gathering place for generations and, as a result, there was considerable public interest in the project. Public meetings, information bulletins and media releases were utilized to ensure the citizens were informed and up to date about the progress of the project.

The community firmly supported the initiative and, in the fall of 2004, construction proceeded. Many environmentally friendly features were incorporated into the plans, including energy efficient lighting, R28 insulation and water metering devices to conserve water. The main innovation was the new refrigeration and heat reclamation system which collects and recycles the heat energy used to maintain the arena and curling ice surfaces and provides abundant heat for the building, hot water for the showers, floor heating in the dressing rooms, heated ice resurfacing water and a snow melting system. The system produces ice quickly, eliminates the need for natural gas heating systems, conserves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

In April, 2006, and at a total cost of \$7.93 million dollars, the new arena opened its doors as a part of the larger recreation complex. The new refrigeration and heat reclamation system, at an incremental capital cost of \$323,000, has resulted in an estimated savings in heating costs of \$45,000 per year over that of a conventional ice plant system. The committee is now looking into the possibility of using the excess reclaimed energy to heat other areas of the recreation complex including the banquet room, common area and the swimming pool water. This could potentially save a further \$30,000 per year in operating energy consumption.

The arena project has changed how the two councils will make decisions on future large scale projects. A consultation process that ensured citizen awareness and invited public input was, and will continue to be, a critical component of the decision-making process. Public involvement translated into positive community perception and broad support for the project. It also resulted in \$1.4 million dollars of public donations towards the new arena. The involvement and support of the citizens from the beginning ensured the project's success. The City and RM of Dauphin councils agree that this project is truly an excellent example of what can be accomplished by citizens and the community working together toward a common goal.

***The new
refrigeration
and heating
system saves
\$45,000 in
heating costs
each year.***

***For more
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better municipal
business practices,
Successful
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program, see the
Association of
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website, at
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