

Successful Municipal Practices: Responding to New Challenges



Tools for Change

BETTER MUNICIPAL BUSINESS PRACTICE: Recycling and Waste Management Project Rural Municipality of Lawrence

The Rural Municipality (R.M.) of Lawrence is located in northwestern Manitoba, nestled against the southern shores of Lake Manitoba and the northern shores of Lake Dauphin. Environmentally friendly waste management programs have long been a council priority and the citizens of the R.M. of Lawrence have enjoyed the option of participating in a municipal recycling program for several years. In 2007 the municipality enhanced the recycling program and added another component - a used oil collection depot.

The Lawrence Recreation Commission operated the municipal recycling program on behalf of the municipality until the end of 2003 when the volume of recycling increased to the point that the Commission was no longer able to manage the program. Council began exploring ways to continue the program, and decided that it would be cost effective for the municipality to deliver the service itself rather than contracting it to an outside supplier.

In 2004 the R.M. of Lawrence constructed a new building at the existing waste disposal grounds site for receiving and sorting recyclables. The Council agreed that the waste disposal grounds would be the most cost effective and convenient location for the operation of the recycling program. A grant from Manitoba Hydro, accessed through the Alonsa Conservation District, paid the cost of designing a green space separating the building from the rest of the waste disposal grounds. Prairie Farm Rehabilitation (PFRA) provided fencing, grass and trees at no charge to create an attractive area in the waste disposal grounds site. As an additional cost saving measure, Council extended the duties of the landfill site supervisor to include the new recycling responsibilities.

An environmentally friendly waste management program has been a Council priority for many years.

Receiving and sorting recyclables at the existing waste disposal grounds site was cost effective for the operation of the program and convenient for the residents.

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After recyclable materials are collected in the municipality, they are taken to the new recycling building for processing. There, recyclable materials are sorted and boxed inside the building and are then moved to a trailer that serves as a storage facility. Once the trailer is full, a municipal truck hauls the sorted recyclable materials to their final destination points and returns the empty trailer to the waste disposal grounds.

The recycling program also includes ten steel recycling bins placed at strategic locations throughout the municipality. A second trailer, purchased by the municipality, has been modified so that one municipal employee is able to pick up the full bins and replace them with new ones. The full bins are delivered to the recycling building at the waste disposal grounds.

The used oil collection depot is also located at the waste disposal site. This is an important component of the recycling program, as it helps to prevent ground water pollution through the improper disposal of oil. The used oil program is self-sustaining as the Manitoba Association for Resource Recovery Corporation (MARRC) pays a rebate for used oil that offsets program operation costs. Recently the Council purchased a new furnace for the maintenance shop that will be fueled with the used oil collected that will be an energy saving measure for the R.M.

With the assistance of funding from the Manitoba Conservation Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention Fund (WRAP) and recycling revenues, the recycling program has grown into a successful and viable operation. The program serves the citizens of the RM of Lawrence and includes recycling pickup service to two neighboring First Nation communities. The volume of recyclable material handled through the program has increased by more than 50% since it began, and Council anticipates these amounts will continue to grow each year. Utilizing the services of municipal employees and equipment to transport recyclables has also resulted in a substantial saving to the municipality as hiring an outside carrier had, in the past, cost the municipality approximately 40% of the recycling revenue.

The R.M. of Lawrence Council is proud of the municipal waste management program that is provided to the citizens of the municipality and surrounding communities. Posters and newsletters offer friendly public reminders of the importance of responsible waste management practices and encourage the use of the convenient recycling and used oil collection program.

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The recycling Program includes a recycling pickup service for two neighboring Aboriginal and Northern Affairs communities.

For more information on better municipal business practices, Successful Municipal Practices, and the Tools for Change program, see the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' website, at www.amm.mb.ca.