

# Successful Municipal Practices: Responding to New Challenges



## *Tools for Change*

### **BETTER MUNICIPAL BUSINESS PRACTICES: New Municipal Office Complex Rural Municipality of South Norfolk & Town of Treherne**

The Rural Municipality (RM) of South Norfolk and the Town of Treherne are located in southern Manitoba on Provincial Highway 2 approximately mid-way between Winnipeg and Brandon. The communities are known for the picturesque rolling lands of the Tiger Hills and their strong and diversified agricultural economies. The two municipalities have cooperated to provide administrative services to citizens since the Town incorporated in 1949, sharing a Chief Administrative Officer, a municipal office and more recently, a Chamber of Commerce, and a website. The most recent joint project undertaken by the two Councils is the construction of new municipal office complex.

The new municipal office complex was a long time in the making, as the Councils of the RM and the Town spent ten years investigating new and creative ways to address the communities' needs for additional office space. The Councils considered the options of renovating the existing space, the demolition of the old building and rebuilding on the same site, or building a new office complex at another location.

The 2006 municipal election brought new Councils for the RM and the Town, and a decision was made to build a new 3,780 square foot structure a few blocks away from the previous building in Treherne. A new office complex was more cost effective than renovating the old building, and building at a new location saved the municipalities the costs of demolishing the old office. A new larger building would also allow the municipalities to build additional office space that could be rented out to generate additional revenue.

Blue prints and floor plans were drafted, and a committee made up of one Council member from each municipality and the CAO was struck to plan and manage the building's construction. Ground was broken on the new municipal office complex in the spring of 2009, with construction lasting until early 2010. The Town and the RM moved into the new complex in February 2010, and the grand opening celebration was held on October 7, 2010.

*The Councils of the RM of South Norfolk and the Town of Treherne worked together to plan and build a state-of-the-art municipal office complex.*

*The new office complex boasts additional office space for rent to local businesses and has been recognized for its innovative and energy-efficient design.*



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The building hosts four offices, a kitchen, public washrooms, Council chambers, four work stations, and a vault. The additional office space proved valuable when, in the summer of 2010, the Treherne Pharmacy suffered damage due to a fire and temporarily moved into the complex. The Pharmacy used two offices, which allowed the business to continue its operations on a smaller scale while renovations to its building were underway.

The new office complex was designed to be energy efficient, and has been designated Power Smart by Manitoba Hydro. A Power Smart Design Standards plaque was awarded to the Councils to acknowledge the efforts in the development and construction of the new building. Energy efficient features include geothermal heating, energy efficient lighting, high insulation levels, parking lot controllers, and energy-efficient dual or triple pane windows.

As a result of these energy efficiencies, the Town and the RM will reduce their energy bill, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and provide employees and customers with a more comfortable environment to work and do business in. According to the Power Smart program summary, the annual electricity savings for the building are 56,000kW, with 19kWh as estimated annual winter demand savings. This will amount to an electricity cost of approximately \$1,860 per year for the entire building. This is a significant energy savings over the previous less energy efficient building, as the new complex is more than twice the size of the previous office and the Hydro cost is only expected to increase by one third. The complex is also estimated to save 43 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, or the equivalent of taking 12 cars off the road.

The project came in under budget at \$775,430 or \$24,570 under the estimated cost of \$800,000. The municipalities also took advantage of grants to offset some of the costs including a Power Smart financial incentive grant of \$10,849, and a Hometown Manitoba grant of \$5,000. Federal Gas Tax funding of approximately \$370,000 was also used to pay for the energy conservation components of the new building. The two municipalities will share the remaining costs equally.

The RM of South Norfolk and the Town of Treherne's new municipal office complex is an excellent example of the success that municipalities can achieve when they work together. The costs of the project were shared between the two municipalities, the RM and the Town jointly oversaw the planning and building of the office complex, and both communities will benefit from the energy savings and the potential revenue to be generated by renting out the additional office space.

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*The new office complex will provide a comfortable shared office space for the RM and the Town for years to come, and demonstrates the value of municipal cooperation to provide services to citizens.*

*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](http://www.amm.mb.ca).*