

Environment

Governance
& Planning

Social

Economic

October 27, 2009
Volume 2 Issue 4

Interconnections

Sustaining Saskatchewan's Future

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Welcome to Interconnections!
- 2 Questions and Answers
- 3 Sustainable Facts
- 4 Community Profiles
- 5 Winner of the 2009 3rd Annual David Suzuki *Digs My Garden* Photo Contest!
- 6 Getting Rid of Grain Bags
- 7 Grenfell – A Community in Bloom
- 8 Sustainable Energy
- 9 Finding Your Funding

FACTS:

- *A single dripping hot water faucet can waste 212 gallons of water per month.*
- *Lap top computers consume up to 90% less energy than a standard desk top computer.*
- *Canadians take home 55 million shopping bags every week*

Welcome to Interconnections!

Goodbye summer and yes, winter is coming....a reality that many of us don't want to face, but it is a part of life in Saskatchewan. As we put on our jackets, it is also the time for the new issue of Interconnections. We have some exciting news to tell you about in this issue. Before we get started though, we want to welcome a few new people that have joined the Interconnections crew this summer.

The first new member is Curtis McManus. Curtis is from Kindersley and he is the new policy analyst from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM). He provides research and analysis on issues of importance to SARM and its members as well as monitors policy issues affecting rural Saskatchewan.

The second new member is Dana Schmalz from Shellbrook, Saskatchewan. In May 2007, she graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Regional and Urban Planning. After graduating, Dana participated in the Alberta Municipal Internship Program for Land Use Planners. Her internship took her to South Eastern Alberta where she had the opportunity to work with over 28 municipalities on long term and short range planning.

After her internship program, Dana was happy to return to Saskatchewan and became part of the Municipal Capacity Development Program (MCDP) team. She is excited to be part of a program that builds sustainable communities across Saskatchewan. Dana's responsibilities at the MCDP consist of assisting municipalities on developing long-term municipal capacity on an inter-jurisdictional basis and supporting the development of sustainability plans in Saskatchewan.

The last new member of the Interconnections team is Che-Wei (*pronounced Chai-way*) Chung. The easy way to remember his name is to think 'Chai tea' from Starbucks and end with 'highway'. Che-Wei has two years of professional experience working for the Town of Olds, Alberta, handling a variety of policy work and working directly with council and the provincial government. He was also briefly an administrator for the Village of Briercrest before he started with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA). Che-Wei is currently responsible for transportation, sustainability and environment policies and his latest project is working with SUMA members on multi-material recycling program.

Curtis, Dana and Che-Wei, welcome to Team Interconnections!

Questions and Answers

Here individuals will have the opportunity to submit questions that they have regarding sustainability. Readers can then respond to these questions by sending referenced responses to the editors and both the question and answer(s) will be included in the following edition of the newsletter. Here is a sample Q and A below to get the ball rolling.

Q: What is Sustainable Design?

A: THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The concept of sustainable design has come to the forefront in the last 20 years. It is a concept that recognizes that human civilization is an integral part of the natural world and that nature must be preserved and perpetuated if the human community itself is to survive. Sustainable design articulates this idea through developments that exemplify the principles of conservation and encourage the application of those principles in our daily lives. ..

Sustainable design, sustainable development, design with nature, environmentally sensitive design, holistic resource management - regardless of what it's called, "sustainability," the capability of natural and cultural systems being continued over time, is key. [1]

Sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment, and the health and comfort of building occupants, thereby improving building performance. The basic objectives of sustainability are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments.

Sustainable design principles include the ability to:

- optimize site potential;
- minimize non-renewable energy consumption;
- use environmentally preferable products;
- protect and conserve water;
- enhance indoor environmental quality; and
- optimize operational and maintenance practices.

Utilizing a sustainable design philosophy encourages decisions at each phase of the design process that will reduce negative impacts on the environment and the health of the occupants, without compromising the bottom line. It is an integrated, holistic approach that encourages compromise and tradeoffs. Such an integrated approach positively impacts all phases of a building's life-cycle, including design, construction, operation and decommissioning.[2]

Source(S):

[1] http://www.nps.gov/dsc/d_publications/d_1_gpsd_1_ch1.htm

[2] http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_OVERVIEW&contentId=8154

Photos, Facts, Quotes!

Key Facts on Sustainable Development

1. Global drivers of consumption

Global consumption levels and patterns are driven at the most fundamental level by:

- Rapid global population growth – Population of 9 billion expected by 2050
- The rise in global affluence and associated consumption – Global middle class expected to triple by 2030; low-income consumers represent a market of US\$ 5 trillion
- A culture of “consumerism” among higher income groups, who account for the greatest per capita share of global consumption

2. Global consumption patterns & impacts

Global consumption is putting unsustainable and increasing stress on:

- The Earth’s ecosystems – 60% of the Earth’s ecosystem services have been degraded in the past 50 years
- The supply of energy and material resources needed for industrial growth – Natural resource consumption is expected to rise to 170% of the Earth’s bio-capacity by 2040
- Human social systems and well-being – Human well-being does not necessarily rely on high levels of consumption

3. The role of the consumer

Consumer attitudes and behaviors:

- Consumers are increasingly concerned about environmental, social and economic issues, and increasingly willing to act on those concerns
- Consumer willingness often does not translate into sustainable consumer behavior because of a variety of factors – such as availability, affordability, convenience, product performance, conflicting priorities, skepticism and force of habit

4. The role of business – mainstreaming sustainable consumption

The business case: Business approaches to sustainable consumption can be grouped into three broad categories:

- Innovation – business processes for the development of new and improved products, services and business are shifting to incorporate provisions for maximizing societal value and minimizing environmental cost
- Choice influencing – the use of marketing and awareness-raising campaigns to enable and encourage consumers to choose and use products more efficiently and sustainably
- Choice editing – the removal of “unsustainable” products and services from the marketplace in partnership with other actors in society

5. The challenge ahead & options for change

- To be able to lead sustainable lifestyles based on informed purchasing decisions and changes in behavior, consumers need the support of all actors: business, governments and civil society
- Business sees a need for further dialogue with stakeholders (such as consumers, retailers, marketers, policy-makers, NGOs) and between businesses to define sustainable products and lifestyles and to formulate actionable responses.
- Leading businesses have the capacity to mainstream sustainable consumption and stakeholders welcome the opportunity to work alongside business moving forward.

Source: World Business Council for Sustainable Development

http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/19Xwhv7X5V8cDIHbHC3G/WBCSD_Sustainable_Consumption_web.pdf

Community Profiles

If your community has a successful story, here's your chance to have it heard!

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) along with the Municipal Capacity Development Program (MCDP) are co-sponsoring a one day workshop called "Sustainable Planning and Development for Small Communities".

The workshop focuses expressly on physical infrastructure and gives municipal decision makers and community leaders real tools to use and make sustainability part of your processes. Covering a wide range of topics from managing water and energy infrastructure to policy development and public participation, the workshop includes numerous examples from the experience of Canadian communities and provides an opportunity to explore possible approaches suited to local needs.

We are asking Municipalities to write a description of their local or area-wide Sustainable projects.

These case studies should be approximately two pages in length and include the following points:

- 1. When was the project initiated, and by whom?**
- 2. Were there any regulatory obstacles? If so, how were they overcome?**
- 3. How did you achieve buy-in from council and/or the community?**
- 4. What external funding, if any, did you receive?**
- 5. Lessons learned**
- 6. Photo of the project**

Examples of Sustainable Projects can include: Town Beautification projects, Housing projects, Waste Water Improvements, Water Distribution Systems, Community and Economic Development Leadership initiatives, Collection and Recycling Programs, Bicycle Network Plans, Protective Services Programs, Health Programs, Community Engagement Processes and the list goes on and on...

We encourage communities to provide this information for the workshop so that everyone can learn from it!

If you would like us to showcase your sustainable projects, please forward the information to Dana – dschmalz@sarm.ca or any of the newsletter editors no later than the 20th of each distribution month.

More Cars on the Road

A three percent annual growth rate will result in the doubling of consumption and production of food and other products in 25 short years. The amount of motor vehicles that are expected to be operated will increase 15 million a year until at least 2010.

WINNER OF THE 2009 3RD ANNUAL DAVID SUZUKI *DIGS MY GARDEN PHOTO CONTEST!*



Heather Kemp and family from Balgonie, SK

Our family planted our first garden this year with absolutely no prior experience. We were always eager to get to a farmer's market for local organic produce, but we could never get there regularly enough. We thought growing a garden would be intimidating, but we just followed a few directions and the plants just did their thing! We're very proud, sharing our fresh produce with co-workers and neighbors. It makes me feel... wholesome, to be growing our own organic vegetables. We also set up a compost bin for all our kitchen and yard waste, and will add our first batch of compost to our garden soil this fall. A rain barrel is next on my wish list. We felt so inspired by our sprouting garden that we also planted strawberries, raspberries, and Saskatoon berries. Our two young boys just love running around the yard, eating from every corner! Of course, we've also stopped using chemicals on our lawn. Barefoot boys and pesticides just don't go together. We're hoping to inspire our neighbors to avoid all the chemical sprays too. Maybe we'll have started an entire neighborhood conversion... we hope.

Getting Rid of Grains Bags

There has been movement recently to address an issue which has become more and more of a headache for rural municipalities over the past few years: the recycling of grain bags. More often than not many of these grain bags are burned after being used because there are no proper facilities to accept and process dirty grain bags. Some landfills refuse to accept them, the distributors won't take them back, and many municipalities have drafted by-laws prohibiting the burning of these bags. It seems, then, that these bags are burned for the want of a better option.

Tammy Myers with the Moose Jaw Watershed Stewards is organizing a pilot project for grain bag recycling. She has proposed holding a special one day event on which producers can take their used grain bags to a drop off point in the Moose Jaw region and from there the bags would be collected and shipped to a recycling facility. At present there is only one company prepared to immediately accept and recycle dirty grain bags: The Plastics Place whose owner Bevin May recently established a recycling facility just outside Bassano Alberta.

Ms. Myer's idea for a one day pilot project is still being developed; there are tentative plans to have the one day pilot ready to roll in the spring but there is nothing finalized as yet. The fact that a solution is being pursued at all, however, is testament to the growing concern people have over what to do with grain bags.

Rightly or wrongly, burning grain bags has the appearance of barbarity in this day and age. Saskatchewan, according to Bevin May, uses more grain bags than anyone else on the prairies: between 12,000 and 16,000 are used in the west each year. But still, in Saskatchewan there are no real choices for grain bag recycling.

There has been considerable interest shown in addressing this problem. Alden Paul, a councilor from the RM of Torch River, for example, was instrumental in setting up a meeting between the province, Ms. Myers, Mr. May, SUMA, and SARM. Ron Waldenberger, a councilor for the RM of Marquis, has likewise expressed an interest in trying to see what can be done to recycle what amounts to thousands of grain bags each year.

At present, there are no formal plans or programs but there is willingness, and from willingness comes progress. Mr. May's company is currently involved in developing a pilot project in Alberta in which councils in the tri-county Drumheller region will establish drop off and pick up locations for Mr. May's mobile pick up crews. Mr. May has also indicated that his company will pay four cents per pound for grain bags which are baled and ready to transport. There are no transportation costs. Mr. May says he will dispatch trucks to Saskatchewan to pick up the grain bags if they are properly baled and there is a maximum load of 40,000 pounds (about 80 or 90 baled grain bags). Here is his company's website: <http://www.tppinc.ca/>

GRENFELL - A COMMUNITY IN BLOOM

(www.grenfell.ca)



Interconnections is pleased to congratulate the Town of Grenfell for being declared a National Winner in the 2009 Communities in Bloom Program. The community of Grenfell joins a celebrated list of honored municipalities from Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland and Japan; all receiving accolades for their efforts in providing an improved quality of life through sustainable community development initiatives.

Grenfell is a small town situated at the corner of Highway #1 and #47 North in southeastern Saskatchewan. The town has many attributes that make it an attractive place to work, raise a family or live a retired lifestyle.

Grenfell's journey to the national champion started in 2003, where a group of private citizens spearheaded by Carol Speidelsbach, met to discuss what could be done to beautify Grenfell with the possibility of entering the Communities in Bloom competition somewhere down the road. In 2008, Grenfell entered the Provincial Communities in Bloom competition and was awarded the Provincial Competition in its population category. As result of this, the town was invited to compete at the 2009 national level.

Since then, the town had been preparing for this competition. Grenfell used the annual "Pitch-In Day", as a launch pad for the National Communities in Bloom competition. Moreover, a core group of eight volunteers devoted their time to cleaning up and beautifying the public areas with the help of the Town of Grenfell Maintenance Crew. This year, a group of residents volunteered their time to build a new sun belt at the local tourist booth. This project won't be possible without the contribution from the Home Depot – Evergreen Rebuilding Nature Grant.

Grenfell's special secret on winning the award was its residents. Residents of Grenfell were not afraid to roll up their sleeves to keep the public areas and their properties clean and tidy. Many residents also went the extra mile by having wonderful floral displays in their yards. One notable benefit of the Communities in Bloom program is that it boosted the town's economic development and increased property values. Most importantly, the program has brought pride to the Town of Grenfell.



Interconnections congratulates Grenfell on a job well done!

Sustainable Energy

There has been a lot of discussion lately about the development of alternate sources of energy. Wind power, solar, and nuclear are the most frequently cited alternative options. But the Meadow Lake Tribal Council is exploring new, innovative, and environmentally sustainable ways to generate power.

The MLTC presented a proposal for alternate power to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies in October. This is the committee which is hearing submissions on the future of energy in Saskatchewan. The MLTC proposes to develop an 80 Megawatt natural gas-fired combined-cycle base-load power plant that would incorporate 15% biomass fired generation. This would be used near Meadow Lake. MLTC Resource Developments CEO Ben Voss also explains that in addition to the larger generator, MLTC proposes the establishment of five small scale 9 MW generators which would be 100% biomass-fired.

The biomass in this instance is wood residue which would produce a clean, reliable and consistent energy source. The idea is interesting: the proponent would collect forest residue (“road side debris”), low value timber, and mill residues and this would be processed into pellets; the pellets then would be burned and this process would generate enough energy to power, for example, remote northern industrial sites. Voss feels that these two projects are “exciting and timely.”

Voss explains that there are a number of benefits to bio-mass generation. It is a low cost option (the total cost for the project is about \$400 million dollars which puts its well below standard cost estimates for other power sources such as wind, solar, certainly nuclear); short times frames (estimated at about 2 years) and this project leaves only a very slight environmental footprint.

MLTC sees this idea as a good, long term investment which complements MLTC’s current involvement in the forestry industry. In addition, Voss argues that independent power generation in the north is going to happen eventually and he adds that “waiting for others to develop [energy sources] is not the best way for MLTC to maximize its business and historical position in the north,”

The idea is, at present, just that: only an idea. It was submitted to the province as part of its hearings on future energy sources in Saskatchewan. But Voss is optimistic about the project and the need for it. Voss says that the north needs power. And continual power outages, to say nothing of the pressures to adopt environmentally friendly energy sources, have highlighted the need to look at alternatives. The project would be entirely financed by the MLTC and Pristine Power.

Growing Deserts

Deserts are advancing and taking over the land. In Mali, the desert has taken over about 220 miles in as few as 20 years. Deserts can be repelled, by developing tree-planting projects, having better agriculture and by managing the land better. However, governments still are reluctant to fund anti-desertification, despite horrific droughts that have occurred in recent years.

Finding your funding:

Funding is often the biggest obstacle that municipalities have to overcome when proceeding with new initiatives such as a municipal sustainability planning. Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association has a website dedicated to grants. The website is updated monthly and it serves as a grant database for many reoccurring provincial and federal grants. For more information about grants, click [here](#).

Here are some grants currently open for submission:

- Affordability and Choice Today – Due November 20
- CIF – Physical Activity Grant (PAGP) – Due November 1
- Community Development Program – On going, but applications must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the start date of the project.
- Western Economic Partnership Agreement – Ongoing.

[The Last Word](#)

“There's so much pollution in the air now that if it weren't for our lungs there'd be no place to put it.”
~Robert Orben

The Newsletter Editors

Shelley Kilbride
Municipal Capacity Development Program (MCDP)
email: skilbride@sarm.ca website: www.municipalcapacity.ca

Dana Schmalz
Municipal Capacity Development Program (MCDP)
Email: dschmalz@sarm.ca

Che-Wei Chung
Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA)
email: sustainability@suma.org website: www.sumasustainability.org

Curtis McManus
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM)
Email: cmcmanus@sarm.ca website: www.sarm.ca



Interconnections