

Environment

Governance
& Planning

Social

Economic

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Interconnections

Sustaining Saskatchewan's Future!

Welcome to *Interconnections*!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1- Welcome to Interconnections!

2 - Question and Answer

3 - Sustainable Facts

4 – Community Profiles

5 – Grants & Funding

6 – Training Opportunities & Workshops

7 - Resources

8 – Sustainability Weblinks

FACT:

The Dirty Thirties ended in 1937, one of the worst drought years in Saskatchewan.

1937 was the first year of a drought that struck eastern Australia and which lasted ten years.

On the bright side, this is the last week of January. As we write this introduction to the most recent issue of *Interconnections*, much of Saskatchewan is digging out from the blizzard which hit the province the weekend of the 22nd. About a foot of snow fell between Friday and Monday.

You may or may not know this (and at this stage of winter you may, in fact, not care), but there are actually several different varieties of snowflakes. There are: prisms, plates, rosettes, and numerous varieties of dendrite snow crystals including “stellar”, “fernlike stellar”, and “radiating”. We can thank Mr. Ukichiro Nakaya for this classification.

Mr. Nakaya was a Japanese glaciologist who, in 1933, began the long process of classifying snow crystals. He identified several major varieties, and numerous minor sorts. Indulging in a penchant for the poetic, Mr. Nakaya wrote that “*snow crystals may be called letters sent from heaven*”, something upon which we might reflect whilst shoveling our car out of a ditch, drift, windrow or snow bank. Saskatchewanians have at least a few different words to denote a pile of snow; it is thus worth noting that Inuit people do *not* have 400 words for snow. According to linguist Steven Pinker, “counting generously, [Inuit language] experts can come up with about a dozen”.

On the opposite end of the climate spectrum, a drought conference scheduled for Swift Current this week was cancelled because of the blizzard. In recent years, drought has become the subject of increasing attention in the scientific/academic community and this weeks conference was meant to discuss ways in which drought in Saskatchewan might be mitigated.

The Swift Current drought conference reflects a growing interest in the study of drought mitigation. There are even a small number of researchers within the scientific community who favor giving names to droughts: the 2001-2003 drought is referred to in some of the literature as “Ada.”

Choosing Swift Current as the site for this conference was not accidental: the Swift Current region has been ground-zero for some of the worst droughts of the 20th century. It is generally thought that the droughts of the 1930's were the worst in Saskatchewan history, but there have been other even more severe droughts. The drought of 1914 is generally considered to be one of the worst of the century, likewise the drought of 1961. Follow this link for an archived CBC news report on one of the great forgotten droughts of Saskatchewan history:

http://archives.cbc.ca/environment/extreme_weather/clips/9039/

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.

Q: What does it mean to be socially sustainable?

A: For a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future.

Social sustainability is about people – individuals and the community. While no universally accepted definition exists, it is generally agreed that socially sustainable communities are characterized by:

- equity
- diversity
- inter-connectedness
- democratic governance
- good quality of life (3)

Q: How can my community become socially sustainable?

A: There are two types or levels of resources in the community that are available to build social sustainability (and, indeed, economic and environmental sustainability) - individual or human capacity, and social or community capacity.

- Individual or human capacity refers to the attributes and resources that individuals can contribute to their own well-being and to the well-being of the community as a whole. Such resources include education, skills, health, values and leadership.
- Social or community capacity is defined as the relationships, networks and norms that facilitate collective action taken to improve upon quality of life and to ensure that such improvements are sustainable.

To be effective and sustainable, both these individual and community resources need to be developed and used within the context of four guiding principles:

1. equity,
2. social inclusion and interaction,
3. security, and
4. adaptability. (1)

Source(S):

(1) http://vancouver.ca/sustainability/sustain_social.htm

(2) <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/socdev/index.htm>

(3) <http://www.richmond.ca/services/Sustainable/social/about.htm>



QUOTES:

“The activist is not the man who says the river is dirty. The activist is the man who cleans up the river”.

-Ross Perot

“The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting working people of all nations and tongues and kindred’s.”

- Abraham Lincoln

Sustainable Facts

Key facts on insulated concrete forms:

Insulated concrete forms (or ICFs) are forms or molds that have built-in insulation for accepting reinforced concrete. The first patent application for an ICF was registered in the late 1960's. Since then, and particularly in the last 5 years, ICFs have been fast-becoming the mainstream preferred building product worldwide for all of the right reasons. These large, hollow blocks are stacked right off of the truck and filled with reinforcing bar and concrete. The end result leaves you with a high-performing wall that is structurally sound, insulated, strapped, has a vapor barrier and is ready to accept final exterior and interior finishes. (10)

- The ICF walls incorporate framing, insulation, vapor barrier and shear resistance into one step.
- The typical added cost of building with ICF vs. the typical wood frame construction practices in Central Texas is typically less than four dollars per square foot.
- The added cost of building with ICF and concrete again typically has a payback (via savings to the homeowner in operating costs) of less than five years.
- Many homeowners report that the “payback” is less than three years.
- ICF homes typically save upwards of 50% of utility costs when complementary materials and methods are incorporated into the structure during construction.
- ICF homes provide quiet indoor environments as concrete and styrofoam are excellent at insulating you from outside noise.
- ICF homes are durable in that the structure is solid concrete, unaffected by many of the problems of common frame construction.
- The insulation value of the EPS foam (Styrofoam) never deteriorates and is unaffected by moisture or settling and creates a superior insulating wall.
- The solid wall construction eliminates drafts and air leaks that allow dust and pollen buildup within the home.
- ICF homes that incorporate proper heating and cooling systems offer clean air environments for the occupants.
- ICF homes don't incorporate cavity wall construction that can be conducive to moisture and mold buildup.

(1) Source: ICF Builders Network, <http://www.icfresource.com/>

Key facts on the Environmental Careers Organization:

Environmental Excellence. Get Certified.

For more than a decade, Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) Canada has offered designations specifically for environmental practitioners. Administered through the Canadian Environmental Certification Approvals Board (CECAB), ECO Canada Certifications are the only designation of their kind in Canada to provide practitioners with formal recognition of their unique environmental competencies.

ECO Canada Certifications are awarded based on the assessment and validation of an individual's competency level as compared to the National Occupancy Standards for environmental employment. ECO Canada also offers networking events that connect people across the country with the primary goal of creating a community of environmental professionals. At these events individuals have the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the environmental industry while increasing the awareness of environmental professionals and ECO Canada Certifications.

What are the advantages of certification?

- Establishes your professional credibility at a national level with clients and employers based on the unique combination of skills, practical knowledge, and experience you have acquired;
- Formally recognizes the specific environmental expertise you have gained on-the-job;
- Provides you with access to a national network for job and mentorship opportunities;
- Member benefits such as networking, corporate discounts; and more.

ECO Canada offers three types of certification:

1. Canadian Certified Environmental Professional (CCEP)-Practitioners with more than five years of environmental experience are eligible for this designation. The Canadian Environmental Practitioner- in-Training (CEPIT) designation is available to practitioners with less than five years of experience, as well as newcomers to Canada.

2. Environmental Auditors- Environmental Management Systems and Compliance

Designations for Environmental Practitioners- For practitioners who conduct environmental audits there are four possible designations:

- Certified Environmental Auditor
- Certified Environmental Sustainable Forest Management Auditor
- Environmental Management Systems Auditor
- Environmental Management Systems Lead Auditor

3. Greenhouse Gas Professionals

- Certified Greenhouse Gas Quantifier
- Certified Greenhouse Gas Verifier

"I believe [ECO Canada] certification provides Canada with an invaluable tool for developing a highly skilled environmental workforce. The [ECO Canada] certification program provides a detailed evaluation of each professional's skill profile to determine whether or not the required standard is met." – Trudy Pedrosa, Pollution Prevention (P2) Team Leader, S.E.A.L. International

For more information please contact Craig Nomeland, CEPIT, Regional Chapter Leader for ECO Canada at 306-964-1517 or visit www.eco.ca

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 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.



Photo courtesy of: Weyburn, Saskatchewan

Town Beautification Project: Assiniboia's Central Park

Submitted by: Bev Monea, Town of Assiniboia Councillor

In the fall of 2006, the Assiniboia Town Council was approached by the owner of a commercial lot on our main street. The owner no longer wished to retain possession of the lot and asked the town to buy back the lot for a nominal value. The south half of the lot had a very old building and was in poor condition. The north half of the lot was empty and fairly narrow.

At the time that the town was approached to buy the lot, council had discussed the benefits of participating in the Communities in Bloom program. Simultaneously, the Chamber of Commerce was looking into possible ways to make the town's main street more attractive. The council decided that the lot could be purchased, the building torn down and a park could be developed at the site, with a newly formed Community in Bloom committee spearheading the project. The park would provide an outdoor area to enjoy coffee or a picnic lunch, or simply a relaxing environment in the outdoors. It should be noted that creating the park was not risk free. The risks were varied: no one would use the park, there are better things to spend money on, the park will be vandalized the second it is built and we will have wasted all of the money, no one will look after the park and it will look terrible. Fortunately, when the vote was cast, the motion to construct the park was carried.



Approximately 90% of the park was constructed with the help of over 100 volunteers. Committee members spent hours in the park. They also spent time calling various members of the community to ask them to pitch in and help with specific tasks. Allocating specific tasks to volunteers proved to be very successful in our case.

As time passed, many more members of the community began to participate in the park's construction. Businesses started offering their support as well, both financially and with work that the volunteers could not perform. A local contractor leveled the site for us free of charge. The concrete business in town provided all of the crusher dust for the park base. A local landscaper spent many hours building the raised planter areas, volunteering his time. The local lumber yard offered to supply the materials for the gazebo and a local construction business built the gazebo...free of charge. We were very conscious of how fortunate we were to acquire free help. We made a point of calling the local paper to be on hand to take pictures whenever one of the businesses was in the park performing a service. The local newspaper was very supportive in this regard. Many hours and lots of effort resulted in a completed park in the fall of 2008. A sign was commissioned to form a gateway at the park's entrance. The sign says "Central Park" after the park was named in a contest.



Today, when you turn the corner from the highway and travel south on Assiniboia's main street, one of the first things you see is beautiful Central Park, created through the efforts of committed and caring community members. No one has vandalized the park, it is beautifully maintained to look spectacular, and it is used frequently! It is a wonderful asset for the Town of Assiniboia. Thankfully, the first step was taken: the decision to "do it".



Grants & Funding

Below is a list of links to current grant and funding opportunities:

- Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association Website: www.suma.org
- Government of Canada: The Federal Government A-Z listing has a Financial Assistance link to all the services under the Government of Canada. <http://canada.gc.ca/azind/aindex-eng.html>
- Canadian Heritage Financial Support Programs – www.pch.gc.ca
- Provincial Government – www.gov.sk.ca

Thinking about applying for any of these grants? The deadlines are coming up quickly, so make sure your applications get in on time!

Upcoming Grant Application Deadlines:

1. **Celebrate Canada** – February 28, 2010
2. **Community Development Trust Fund** – May 14, 2010

Saskatchewan Municipal Awards nominations deadline is **March 19th, 2010!**

The *2010 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program* has been launched and now is the time to start your submission. All practices started in 2000 or later are eligible for an award, including those involving multiple municipalities. You can nominate your practice or a neighbouring municipality's practice and also be nominated in more than one category. Categories for 2010 are:

- Municipal Service Excellence
- Economic Development Leadership
- Regional Leadership and Partnerships
- Community Development Leadership
- Environmental Stewardship, and
- Heritage Conservation Leadership – new category this year

For more information or to download nomination forms and guidelines, please visit <http://www.municipalawards.ca> or call 306-787-8885.

Training Opportunities & Workshops

Municipal Leadership Development Program

The Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP) March 8th modules are fast approaching!

The only program developed exclusively for elected and appointed municipal leaders in Saskatchewan.

Mayors, reeves, councilors and senior municipal staff are able to benefit from an innovative program designed to strengthen local government leadership. This program is structured around key workshops, which in most instances, are delivered over a one-day timeframe. Program participants receive a Certificate of Completion to acknowledge the workshops attended.

This program was designed through a partnership of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, New North, the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan, the Rural Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan, and the Ministry Municipal Affairs. This program was designed to be responsive to the needs of municipal officials and therefore seeks continuous feedback through the municipal associations regarding the education and training interests of municipalities.

The Municipal Leadership Development Program is a series of six modules, or workshops, that target specific issues of importance to northern, rural and urban municipalities.

Choose from one of the following modules:

- Financial Planning and Strategic Planning for Municipalities
- Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals
- Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace
- Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities
- Community and Land Use Planning

For more information and to register please visit: <http://www.mldp.ca/>

“Fall is my favorite season in Los Angeles, watching the birds change color and fall from the trees.”

- David Letterman

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA)

The Spring Education and Training Symposium – “Efficiencies in providing leisure service facilities and public spaces” April 11th – 15th Humboldt, SK.

For the sixth consecutive year volunteers and municipal representatives will gather to receive training and exchange best practices. The focus being on the sustainable management of leisure service facilities...Saskatchewan's parks, ice rinks, walking paths and community centers.

The symposium features partial and full day workshops. Delegates include public works employees, recreation directors, facility managers, park operators and volunteers who attend to be exposed to new theories and practical solutions.

Featured topics being addressed at this year's event will include:

- Naturalization and xeriscaping in urban park environments
- Communities in Bloom, achieving success and overcoming challenges
- Plantings, large scale variety displays within municipal green spaces
- Trails and pathways, planning processes and design principles
- Built Environments and factors that encourage connectivity and healthy lifestyles
- Urban forestry care and maintenance techniques that support public safety
- Playground design, development and inspection
- Arena Operators Level 2-Provincial Refrigeration Certificate received upon successful completion
- Provincial Pool Operators Course
- Building Maintenance Level 1, mechanical and structural maintenance of facilities
- Supervisory Skills, becoming a better leader and supervisor
- The Ice Arena, A Community Asset or Environmental Liability- how forward thinking communities have turned their arena energy costs into a source of revenue rather than a source of ridicule.
- The networking opportunities, facilitated discussion, and a “hands on” approach to learning ensures that delegates take back information and apply knowledge directly to their local recreational facilities and public outdoor spaces.
- An atmosphere is achieved that openly reviews planning processes, maintenance procedures, and the setting of budgets in a manner to increase their effectiveness. Ultimately delegates gain an increased capacity to serve the community in which they live.

For further information on the 2010 Spring Education and Training Symposium, contact the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association at 1-800-563-2555.

Sustainable Planning and Development Workshop for Northern Communities

Save the date! March 11th & 12th, 2010

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs -Community Planning Branch, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Municipal Capacity Development Program cordially invite all northern communities to participate in a Sustainable Planning and Development Workshop for Northern Communities.

Designed for northern municipal elected officials, planners and community leaders, this comprehensive workshop provides practical approaches to addressing long-term infrastructure needs - everything from energy and water to housing and land use from the perspective of small municipalities.

The workshop will take place over two days and will cover a number of sessions:

Day 1: Will focus more specifically on land use planning and its role to ensure sustainable communities. The tools to manage planning such as:

- *Official Community Plans, Zoning bylaws,*
- *Needs identification and Visioning exercises.*

Day 2: Will focus on the basic principles of building sustainable communities. The following topics will be covered:

- *What is sustainability?*
- *Transportation, Energy and Materials Management*
- *Water, Waste Water and Storm Water Systems*
- *Housing and Community Policy and Regulatory Tools*
- *Community Participation: Tools and Practices*
- *Examples of successful projects that everyone can learn from*

This workshop will provide decision-making approaches you can use right away to plan for a sustainable tomorrow.

For more information please contact:

Dana Schmalz
Development Officer – Municipal Capacity Development Program
(306) 761-3737
or e-mail: dschmalz@sarm.ca

Registration opens February. Watch for upcoming emails!

Resources

A Guide to Municipal Cooperation: Succeeding in Regional Partnerships

The Municipal Capacity Development Program is proud to announce the release of **A Guide to Municipal Cooperation: Succeeding in Regional Partnerships**. The document is a valuable resource for elected officials, engaged community members, First Nation and Métis community representatives, government officials, consultants, planners and other professionals who strive to implement and uphold sustainable practices.

The purpose of the guide is to provide municipalities with the information, resources and tools that they will need to begin or continue effective working relationships with other municipalities.

The full-length guide provides a wealth of information on:

- beginning a collaborative process;
- structuring an intermunicipal working group; and
- maintaining a cooperative relationship.

The document also contains templates to guide municipalities when writing agreements, memorandums of understanding, and questions to consider when beginning the process.

Intermunicipal and regional cooperation is an effective way for municipalities to work together or combine resources and knowledge to tackle issues of mutual concern and issues that cross municipal boundaries. The GMC provides municipalities with the tools to work together regionally to:

- Share knowledge.
- Enhance service delivery.
- Focus on building a strong region.
- Effectively plan for growth.
- Practice consistent planning.
- Increase the quality of life in the area.
- Share the risk, control and benefits of development initiatives.
- Ensure consistency.

We hope that the full-length document serves as a useful resource in building effective and long-term intermunicipal cooperation across the province.

The **Guide to Municipal Cooperation and Quick Reference Guide** can be found at www.municipalcapacity.ca

(Click on “Resource Materials” and then “Intermunicipal Cooperation”)

Sustainability Weblinks

The following is a list of web links that deal with sustainability:

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Economy/Sustainability/>

<http://www.sdtc.ca/en/contact.htm>

<http://www.saskrce.ca/>

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=C07483BF-1>

<http://www.sustdev.org/>

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd/dsd_contact.shtml

<http://www.naturechallenge.org/dmg09/>

www.municipalcapacity.ca

<http://community.wwf.ca/livingplanetcity>

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