

# **Best Practice**

## **Community Recreation Program**

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### **THE PRACTICE**

The RM of Big Stick recognized that the municipality's population was in decline and that the municipality needed to work with surrounding communities instead of competing with them to sustain various forms of recreational infrastructure.

### **THE PROCESS**

The RM of Big Stick began budgeting a minimum of \$5,000 per year to be put into a recreation account that could be accessed by groups for recreational projects only. Council is responsible to review applications for these funds, and disperse the funds as they see fit.

A committee was formed of representatives from each municipality in the area. This provided input from all communities and feedback to the various councils on a regular basis. The program coordinator and the committee were responsible for organizing and implementing the required work.

### **THE RESULTS**

The RM of Big Stick has been able to maintain recreational facilities in the community that would otherwise have been lost. The funds that the recreation account provides are efficient seed money to get projects started and have been coupled with grant programs to complete projects such as a new roof on the community hall and the installation of an energy efficient heating system in the curling rink. A new school playground and upgrades to the Maple Creek arena have recently been completed.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

The RM of Big Stick learned that a little bit of seed money can accomplish a significant amount. The results of this funding have given our ratepayers a sense of ownership in numerous projects in many communities. Ratepayers have expressed that support provided to other communities has created a welcome feeling when enjoying their facilities.