

Best Practice

Joint Municipal Fire and Rescue Station

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The Town of St. Walburg had a fire station large enough for its needs; however, with the purchase of a command vehicle to transport fire fighters to rural fires, the existing fire hall did not fulfill the needs of the surrounding RMs. As the majority of fire calls come from the RMs, those two municipalities provided the necessary up-front cash for the upgrade.

THE PROCESS

The process was initiated by the volunteer firefighters looking for ways to solve a lack of space created by the formation of the combined Joint Municipal Fire and Rescue Association. With the encouragement of the municipalities involved, the Joint Municipal Fire and Rescue Association went ahead and came up with a wish list of facilities and equipment.

The joint fire and rescue station was a main priority of the two surrounding RMs; however, the joint fire and rescue station was near the bottom of the priority list for St. Walburg council. The two RM councils provided the up-front costs associated with the new facility in order to convince the Town of St. Walburg that a regional fire and rescue station was necessary. The Town of St. Walburg had difficulty provided their share of the costs associated with the new facility, and were offered an interest-free loan from the RM of Mervin to cover the town's financial commitment.

Joint meetings of the three councils and the volunteers followed. The town provided an ideal new location on a service road adjacent to the highway and the volunteer firefighters started a fund raising drive to help pay for the project. These volunteers also initiated solicitation of sponsors from the private sector which resulted in donations of \$34,048. Other sponsors provided materials that further reduced the final bill.

THE RESULTS

As a direct result of in-kind materials, supplies, labour and donations the project originally estimated to cost \$480,000 without a new rescue truck. When the project was finished, the total cost was \$289,080, including a new fire truck. These figures speak volumes to those in the municipal sector that are constantly reminded of cost over-runs.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project exemplifies how cooperation with other municipalities and a group of citizens working towards a common goal can not only achieve success, but also expedite the process. The cooperation between the municipal bodies sets a precedent for more cooperation in the future.