

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

North East Quadrant

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Project Date: 2007 (Ongoing)

THE PRACTICE

Many bridges throughout the North East were falling into disrepair. It was difficult to find experienced and qualified contractors, money and funding, to carry out the necessary repairs. The North East Quadrant was created to address these problems, not only for the area, but the province as a whole.

The main goal of the North East Quadrant is to find a way to bring bridge costs down to a reasonable level. The project will facilitate the design of a modern bridge system. The bridge system design will influence policy regarding engineering guidelines and building requirements. The design of the new bridge system will also help to support and generate future economic activity including oil drilling, oil sands, butane and mining developments.

THE PROCESS

In November 2007, a meeting was called regarding municipal infrastructure in the North East and a lack of funding. Ten municipalities in the North East attended the meeting. It was found that the bridge infrastructure was in need of repair and a lack of contractors and high expenses of the bridge repairs/replacements would make it difficult to complete. It was decided that each municipality would contribute the same amount of money to begin the process. Each municipality within the North East Quadrant agreed to hire two consultants who would do the majority of the work. The consultants determined that there was a need for funding, and told the municipalities where they could access it.

It was difficult to find experienced and qualified contractors in the area. Two bridge crews were developed in 2008 and another one in 2009. The consultants also found that within the North East there was \$330 million that would be forthcoming in bridge replacements and repairs. After initial money was given to the group, an additional amount was asked for from each municipality involved. Each municipality willingly contributed since they saw the long term benefits. Through research they found that there would be a significant cost saving by ordering material as a group of municipalities and building and repairing bridges in packages. In December of 2010 the North East Quadrant went one step further and signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which was necessary to approach the Federal and Provincial governments.

THE RESULTS

The formation of this North East Quadrant has gained a great deal of success and recognition to date. Because of the efforts of this group, municipalities have better access to bridge contractors and repairs. Municipalities are now capable of ordering bridge materials for bulk delivery, resulting in shorter wait times, more effective distribution of materials and considerable cost savings. The knowledge gained in the area of bridge planning, design, and construction will have a positive impact on the residents of the municipality as well as the province.

LESSONS LEARNED

There has been a great deal of knowledge gained regarding bridge repair and infrastructure.