

Best Practice

LivCom Project

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THE PRACTICE

The Town of St. Walburg had, in the past, suffered from a series of financial constraints. St. Walburg's small population and diminutive tax base left the community with an inability to efficiently access provincial and federal grants to improve the quality of life in the community.

THE PROCESS

The community decided to enhance its chances of obtaining grants by increasing community pride and applying for an International Award for Liveable Communities (LivCom Awards). In order to succeed, it was necessary to excel in the areas of planning for the future, promotion of healthy lifestyles, heritage management, landscape enhancement, environmentally sensitive practices and community sustainability.

Prior to submitting a presentation to LivCom for judging, council focused on past projects and achievements to enhance the community's chances of winning. Volunteer projects such as the chuckwagon monument, Centennial Park, communiplex and walking trail were given considerable focus to showcase the strong commitment community members have in growing their town.

Local residents and organizations were approached for funding after the presentation was finalized. When chosen as a finalist in the 20,000 and under category, members of the community came up with the funds for airfare and accommodation for two delegates to attend the finals in Hangzhou, China. The Town of St. Walburg won a bronze award at the 2006 LivCom Awards. Town council was impressed with the ensuing publicity and the decision to apply for a 2007 LivCom was made.

Already familiar with the application and evaluation process, the Town of St. Walburg won a silver award at the 2007 LivCom Awards in London, England. More importantly, the Town of St. Walburg was judged to be the most sustainable community in the world, and the town and its residents were finally getting recognition for all of the work they had done.

THE RESULTS

Benefits from implementing this practice are the creation of civic pride and the recognition of volunteers. Being exposed to so many innovative ideas at the LivCom Awards has greatly enhanced the town's ability to respond to new situations and create effective solutions to emerging challenges. The Town of St. Walburg greatly exceeded our expectations by winning an award two years in a row. St. Walburg has received recognition by The International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration and is featured in its magazine distributed in over 50 countries.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Town of St. Walburg has learned that exposure to new and innovative ideas cannot be underestimated. We have learned how other communities of similar size across the world deal with similar challenges we face in our community. Specific changes the town has made are preparing monthly water bills instead of every three months and installing exterior water meter readers. The community appreciates council's effort to improve living conditions in the town, and this has been witnessed by a strong volunteer base.