

Best Practice

Harvest for Hunger

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THE PRACTICE

A one-day event coordinated by more than 400 volunteers, attended by roughly 6,500 people, and which raised \$40,000 for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank while raising awareness about the ongoing issue of global hunger. The towns and RMs of Langenburg and Churchbridge worked together to plan and execute the event, during which they also broke a Guinness World Record for the number of threshing machines running simultaneously.

THE PROCESS

The project was developed when some local citizens came up with the idea to do something for the Foodgrains Bank. Then it evolved into trying to break the threshing machine world record, and so began the plans for the massive one-day event.

The municipalities involved in this project helped with the donation of parking, camping land for the event, garbage cans, signage, general equipment, and more. The real focus of this project was the partnership itself. It was truly amazing how all of the citizens of the various communities came together to help. The councils supported the project and provided the materials that they had, land and assistance. But this was far more than that. In a day and age when we all focus on ourselves or just our own communities this showed the "olde tyme spirit" of people.

More than 400 volunteers supported this event. People from around western Canada, the United States, and beyond gave their time and equipment for the event to be a success. Resources included but were not limited to: thousands of volunteer hours, tents, farm land, seed, 42 threshing machines, tractors, tradeshow booths, farmers market booths, concession stands, entertainment stand, go carts, side by sides for event organization, shuttles, displayed farm equipment, industrial lights, radios, and media organizers.

THE RESULTS

The project brought municipalities together that have worked together in the past and continue to work together in the present and future. But what was unique was how the citizens of the communities felt about the event and called it their own. There were no borders or independent ownership of it. It was a regional vision, a goal that all could come together for and be proud of.

Media coverage was extensive as it was on the National News, Prairie Farm Report, multiple newspapers, Facebook pages including the Olde Tyme Harvest for Hunger Facebook page, and many more, including local radio.

The biggest challenge was planning an event for 5000+ people and not being able to guarantee the weather needed. In the end the planning was well worth it and the event was held with very few challenges. The organizers thought of literally

everything. They prepared radio codes; volunteers had a safety meeting the morning of the event; set up and take down were seamless; parking passes were issued; corn maze search crews were set up in the event someone got lost in the nine-acre maze; shuttles were in place to help the seniors and care home residents and for any other citizens that needed assistance. Concession stands were various; a pancake breakfast was open for volunteers and then the public; entertainment was amazing and varied; media, communication, and forethought were out of this world!

LESSONS LEARNED

The biggest lesson was not from the organizing itself but the reason why the group spent all those hours organizing and executing the event: for those less fortunate. Those of us who are lucky to live where we do to remember to stop and think about how we can help, and to act on it