

Practice Name:**Date Created:** 26-May-09**Author:****Last Updated:****Abstract:****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Practice	Municipal Government Day
Date	15-January-08
Name of Municipality	City of Grande Prairie
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THE ISSUE**Abstract:**

What is the practice you developed or are developing (brief abstract)?

Please briefly describe the final practice developed. (e.g. if you developed a new Council agenda, list the agenda items, or if a new communications plan was created, provide a summary of the plan's goals, objectives and highlights.)

The City of Grande Prairie has developed an annual Municipal Government Day Program.

The purpose of Municipal Government Day in Grande Prairie is to highlight the role of municipal government and achieve three main objectives:

1. Increase the public's access to Council members and city staff.
2. Bring together officials from neighboring municipalities to encourage communication.
3. Highlight the importance of, and encourage a sense of pride in, city staff.

These objectives are achieved through hosting a variety of events on Municipal Government Day including a City Hall open house and guided tours, municipal trivia and art contests, a free community barbecue and a friendly games competition with neighboring municipal elected officials and administration.

Need:

Please describe (just a couple of sentences or bullet points) why you needed to create this practice (policy or process).

What issue made it necessary? (e.g. “We needed a comprehensive plan to deal with...”, or “We needed an annual forecasting tool because...”)

The decision to celebrate a Municipal Government Day in Grande Prairie was made in support of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) initiative in 2002. The FCM encouraged municipalities across Canada to celebrate their achievements by planning special activities that highlight the fundamental role municipal government plays in sustaining and improving quality of life in their communities.

In addition, the Municipal Government Day Program complements the City's Strategic Plan in the areas of regional partnerships and collaboration openness and accessibility of Council enhancing communication and striving to be a customer responsive organization through cooperation, integrity, flexibility, provision of quality service by caring employees in a fun atmosphere.

The overwhelming success of the first ever Municipal Government Day in Grande Prairie on April 30, 2002 convinced City Council that an annual Municipal Government Day Celebration Program was warranted.

CREATING YOUR PRACTICE

Research:

How did you obtain information to help design your practice (including consultation with stakeholders, formal and informal research)?

Please include any research documentation you can share, or give us a source reference (e.g. Web site, literature, "We reviewed the bylaws from other municipalities in the area...").

The City considered the FCM suggested template for a Municipal Government Day Proclamation and ideas for events and activities.

Research was conducted on the previous Province of Alberta Municipal Involvement Week program initiative in the 1980's as well as the City's previous Municipal Involvement Week events and activities from 1986 to 1989.

Representatives of the various local media were invited to meet and discuss their involvement with sponsorship and promotion of Municipal Government Day.

Local community groups were contacted to provide input and involvement on activities that could be hosted in conjunction with Municipal Government Day, for example, the Grande Prairie Public Library partnered with the City to hold a Youth Art Contest.

Municipal Councils within the region were consulted on the potential for involvement in organizing and hosting an event leading up to Municipal Government Day in Grande Prairie.

Local Members of the Legislative Assembly and Member of Parliament were invited to participate in local Municipal Government Day activities and sponsorship.

Process:

How did you go about designing your practice? For instance, did you create a team, hire a consultant, borrow something ready-made from another jurisdiction?

Describe briefly who did the design work and what process they followed.

City Council establishes a Municipal Government Day Team annually to plan and coordinate activities to celebrate Municipal Government Day. The Council Committee consists of three Aldermen appointed by Council, the Mayor ex officio, and three members of staff appointed by the City Manager. The Terms of Reference for the Committee include preparation of a program of activities, estimated budget and source of funding for the events to be approved by City Council.

The Team develops and obtains Council approval of a Municipal Government Day Program and Budget. Once approved, the Team coordinates all activities for the celebration with the assistance of staff, volunteers and sponsors.

GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE

Authority:

Whose/what approval did you need to create and implement the practice?

City Council initiated the creation of Municipal Government Day in Grande Prairie through approval of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, throughout our country's history, municipal governments have played a key role in building Canada's economic, social and environmental infrastructure

AND WHEREAS, in recognition of the fundamental role played by municipal governments in sustaining and improving the quality of life in our communities:

Be it resolved:

1. that Municipal Government Day be proclaimed annually in the City of Grande Prairie,
2. that members of Council and municipal staff play an active role in Municipal Government Day activities,
3. that community groups and other stakeholders be encouraged to host activities on Municipal Government Day.

City Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Municipal Government Day Team and appoints members of Council to the Council Committee.

City Council approves the Municipal Government Day Program and Budget.

An Administrative Report was prepared requesting Council approve a motion to proclaim Municipal Government Day in Grande Prairie.

Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Municipal Government Day Team were submitted to Council for approval.

A Municipal Government Day Program and Budget were presented for Council approval.

Reporting:

How did you inform the decision-maker(s) about the practice and your need for their approval?

Please note the name of any documents provided to the decision-makers that you would be willing to share.

Consultation:

Did you consult with stakeholders as part of your approval process?

If so, how? If possible, attach a copy of templates, surveys or other documents you used as part of your consultation.

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Council, staff, community groups and Regional Municipal Stakeholder consultation and involvement in the Municipal Government Day Program is a major component in planning and financing the program and is the main reason why Municipal Government Day is such a success.

Council provides input on activities through discussions during Council Committee of the Whole meetings, the Municipal Government Team members or during Council meetings.

City staff are asked to contribute ideas or suggestions for activities during the program planning stage. Service areas develop plans to showcase their department services, personnel, vehicles, equipment and innovations. Many areas develop special activities to promote their services and provide opportunities for interaction with members of the public such as cookie decorating activities, equipment demonstrations and free transit service.

Business, organizations and community groups are personally invited to participate, sponsor or contribute to the program.

Letters are sent and meetings are held with local media, inviting participation in and promotion of the program. Local media develop promotional contests that require community participation and relate to the Municipal Government Day theme.

The Grande Prairie Public Library meets with the Municipal Government Day Team to develop the Youth Art Contest.

Letters are sent to regional municipalities seeking ideas and participation in the program.

Letters are sent to the local MLA's and the City's MP inviting participation and sponsorship in the program.

An advertisement is placed in the local newspaper inviting proposals for entertainers or performers for inclusion in

IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE**Plan:**

Describe the process you went through to implement the practice. If you used an implementation plan, please note it here.

A Municipal Government Day Team is in place to coordinate the activities for Municipal Government Day.

The Team develops a program and budget for Municipal Government Day.

The Team prepares an Event Plan to identify all tasks to be completed, implementation timeframes, and Team member responsibilities.

Regular Team meetings are held to coordinate implementation, with volunteers and department representatives attending as needed.

An Event Plan Status Report is provided at each Team meeting.

All Committee minutes are forwarded to City Council for information.

Following Municipal Government Day, a final report on program activities and a financial accounting is completed and presented to Council.

Policy:

What changes to bylaws, regulations or procedures were needed to implement this practice and how did you deal with them?

The Municipal Government Day Program is implemented without any formal changes in bylaws, policies or procedures.

Please attach a copy of the change in bylaw, policy or procedure.

When:

When did your municipality begin to use the practice?
Was it implemented all at once or in stages?

The first Municipal Government Day Program was held on April 30, 2002 and has been held annually since implementation, due to its success.

Who:

Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

The Municipal Government Team is responsible for planning and coordinating activities to celebrate Municipal Government Day.

If someone else is responsible for ongoing management, who is it?

Success of the program, however, is dependent on the active participation of city council, staff, local businesses, community organizations, and other Orders of Government.

RESOURCES REQUIRED**Budget:**

How much did it cost you to design and implement your practice (i.e. We saved/spent \$XX per year)?

The Legislative Budget includes \$5,000 annually towards the cost of Municipal Government Day activities.

What are your ongoing operational and capital costs, if any?

In 2003, the total program cost was \$20,000 however nearly 80% of the price was paid for through community sponsorship and donations, with the net cost to the Municipal Government Day Program account being \$3,935.

Staff:

What human resources did you need to design, implement and manage your practice? (e.g. "It took X staff member (s) X months on this" or "This is part of normal staff duties.")

The Municipal Government Day Program is planned, designed and implemented by the current members of council and staff. The Municipal Government Day Team generally meets regularly from February to June each year.

Infrastructure:

What "capital costs" (such as information technology, other equipment or building assets) did you need to design, implement, manage, and/or evaluate your practice?

There are no capital costs associated with the Municipal Government Day Program.

EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE

Formal:

If you did a formal evaluation (e.g. user satisfaction survey, analysis of annual expenditures or number of rate payers served) for your practice, please describe the evaluation tool and the process used.

A final report on Municipal Government Day activities and a financial accounting is completed and presented to council annually. The Municipal Government Day Team develops this report.

Tell us who was involved.

City staff are asked for feedback on the event. Specifically staff are asked to comment on what they thought went well, what problems or concerns they had and how the next Municipal Government Day celebration can be improved.

Informal:

If you did an informal evaluation, describe what you did (such as discussing the practice with people in the office or on the street, or letters/comments received).

Informal evaluation of the program is provided through monitoring of media reports, letters from participating municipalities, and comments from the public, staff and council.

Performance measures:

Please list the performance measures for this practice (i.e. reduced number of complaints, money saved, or change in equipment life expectancy.)

Please list the process you used for measuring performance, (i.e. We do annual surveys on...) examples include:

- collecting data
- establishing a baseline
- applying the measures

- results
- follow up

Success of the Municipal Government Day Program is measured by accomplishment of the objectives set for the program, although formal and specific performance measures for the program have not been established.

Each year, data is collected on number of city hall guided tours attended, number of visitors and residents served at the community barbecue, number of businesses and community organizations involved, financial contributions from internal and external sources and level of expenditures. This information is used in measuring performance against prior year's program results.

Changes:

(a) Based on the evaluation (formal or informal), describe any changes you have made, or would like to make, to your practice as a result. (e.g. "After implementing this practice, we decided that it would be better if...")

-or-

(b) Has your practice met your expectations and if so, how?

The success of the past three annual Municipal Government Day celebrations have exceeded expectations.

In 2004, our program brought eight neighboring municipalities together, including two from the Province of British Columbia, for some friendly challenges.

Over 200 school students attended the City Hall Open House and Tours.

The Community barbecue served over 3,000 hot dogs and hamburgers to visitors and residents.

Financial contributions and gifts in kind were provided by over 30 local businesses and organizations.

The City Hall Grand Opening event held in conjunction with the 2004 Municipal Government Day celebrations drew attendance by the City's two MLA's, over 25 former members of Grande Prairie City Council and representation from more than 14 neighboring municipalities.

LESSONS LEARNED / BENEFITS RECEIVED

Benefits:

What are the benefits of this practice to your municipality? (eg. Preparation of Council agenda packages now requires less time, etc.)

The benefits of the Municipal Government Day Program include:

- greater customer awareness of the services provided by the city,
- the importance of our staff is highlighted,
- public access to council members in an informal atmosphere is made available,
- neighboring councils and staff join together in a number of fun events thereby developing inter-municipal relationships. City council through its Strategic Plan has adopted an Operating Philosophy of commitment to regional partnerships and cooperation and is working towards a goal of promoting regional collaboration.
- pride in our City is apparent throughout Municipal Government Day.

Key Lessons:

What key lessons have you/your municipality learned through the process of:

- designing;
- obtaining approval;
- implementing; and
- evaluating your practice?

Include any problems, surprises, and unanticipated benefits. (e.g. “We realized that we needed to spend more time...”)

Through Municipal Government Day, we learned:

- City staff show incredible enthusiasm in the opportunity to express the pride, professionalism and innovation with which they approach their work. Staff volunteered hours and resources to ensure the program was a success. Over 100 volunteers conducted tours, worked at the community barbecue and manned department displays.
- Local business, community organizations and groups provide valuable support to this type of program through financial contributions, donations and participation.
- The Municipal Government Day Program is one of the many initiatives that make Grande Prairie the Greatest Place to Be.

Advice to Municipal Peers:

What advice would you give to another municipality that is considering adopting your practice? Is there anything you might have done differently?

The Municipal Government Day Program is a tremendous success in Grande Prairie and city council encourages municipalities throughout Alberta to establish similar programs.

PRACTICE UPDATES**New Information:**

There may be some new information to add since this practice was first posted. This is especially true if:

- a new process has been implemented in your municipality;
- there are new practice evaluation results; or
- there has been a change affecting organizational direction. For example, explain how new economic conditions or a new vision/strategy affect the practice.

Please indicate those changes here. Don't forget to list any new documents that may be useful to your peers. Then go to "Other Information" to attach the new documents.

Municipal Government Day is held annually in Grande Prairie. Complete reports on the program each year are available.

OTHER INFORMATION**Suggestions:**

Please list relevant information sources that others might use or you would be willing to share (courses, Web sites, literature, experts).

All documents concerning the Municipal Government Day Program in Grande Prairie are available.

Documents & Attachments:

Please attach (using the "Browse" button below) any documents you would be willing to share with others interested in your practice (e.g. a bylaw, a policy, approval documents, templates).

2003 Municipal Government Day Final Report
2002 Municipal Government Day Final Report
2004 Municipal Government Day Final Report
2005 Municipal Government Day Final Report
2006 Municipal Government Day Final Report
2007 Municipal Government Day Final Report

* Note: If you do not have an electronic copy of a document, please send Municipal Excellence a paper copy for scanning to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs
Municipal Excellence Network
17th Floor, Commerce Place
10155-102 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 4L4

Nominations:

Do you have any suggestions of other individuals or municipalities with municipal practices that we should add to the Municipal Excellence network? Please list their practice, municipality, and contact information.

Or, e-mail menet@gov.ab.ca and let us know about a municipal colleague that has a really good way of doing things.

COMMENTS

Have we missed something; anything you'd like to add to the areas we have touched on, or an area we have not

mentioned?