

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

Name of Practice	Peace Oilsands Synergy Group
Date	9-July-08
Name of Municipality	<a href="#">Northern Sunrise County</a>
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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.)

A collaborative partnership between Municipal District of Smoky River, Municipal District of Peace, Municipal District of Big Lakes, Municipal District of Northern Lights, Municipal District of Opportunity, Town of Peace River and Northern Sunrise County with provincial support, industry support, First Nations, Metis and Community Services participation.

**Need:**

The municipalities came together in 2005 to address the challenges of uncertainty and discuss the increased activity within the Peace Oil Sands operating area.

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

In 2006, Northern Sunrise County hosted a forum that had concurrent workshops on Education & Training, Health & Social, Infrastructural, and Housing.

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

Many issues were identified and the concept of forming the Peace Oilsands Synergy Group became clear.

We needed a plan to deal with the following issues:

- Identify issues relating to energy development by reviewing socio-economic activities, employment and training, health and related social services and infrastructure.

- Promote and enhance economic development opportunities within the Peace Oilsands operating area.

- Work closely with industry representatives, energy developers, local and provincial governments, aboriginal peoples, stakeholders and numerous other regional organizations.

## 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...").

Initially we wanted an overview of Synergy Groups: Principles, Process and Structures.

We set up a workshop where representatives of various Synergy Groups around the Province would come and tell us what their best practices are and provide insight into forming our own Synergy Group.

We invited Gary Redmond of Synergy Alberta to give us an understanding of the processes to address these socio-economic impacts.

Also consulted were:

- Janet Marr, Sundre Petroleum Operators Group (SPOG).

The Sundre Petroleum Operators Group (SPOG) is an organization of representatives from the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB), the regulating body for development of Alberta's energy resources along with 30 Oil and Gas companies and 15 community groups in the Sundre/Caroline area.

- Amanda Spycer and Harvey Filger, Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA). CEMA's mandate is to study the cumulative environmental effects of industrial development in the Wood Buffalo region and produce guidelines and management frameworks. A multi-stakeholder organization, CEMA is governed by 48 members representing all levels of government, industry, regulatory bodies, environmental groups, Aboriginal groups, and the local health authority, which have an interest in protecting the environment in the region.

- Robert Deresh, Chair, Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA). LICA is a community-based not-for-profit association whose main goals are to provide residents with a timely response to concerns identified in the Lakeland area and to ensure that growing development is conducted in a responsible manner.

We visited Synergy Alberta's website often at <http://www.synergyalberta.ca/>

### 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.

We essentially borrowed the practice from the other Synergy Groups as a result of observing their actions and outcomes. Overall, Northern Sunrise County relied on its own staff, staff from Northern Alberta Development Council, the Energy Resources Conservation Board and the Oilsands Sustainable Development Secretariat with the Treasury Board to guide the Synergy Group.

## GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE

### **Authority:**

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

We required approval of all participating partner municipal districts and counties.

### **Reporting:**

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

By consensus, we moved forward on the approval of the practice. We provided background documents highlighting the history of the pioneer Peace Oilsands Synergy to formalize our activities.

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.

Yes, all member municipalities and invited stakeholders as follows: Village of Donnelly, Village of Girouxville, Woodland Cree First Nation, Lubicon Lake Band, Peavine Metis Settlement, Duncan's First Nation, Cadotte Lake Metis, Gift Lake Metis Settlement, Town of McLennan, Metis Nation Region 6, Village of Berwyn, Town of Falher, MD of Fairview, Village of Nampa, Lac Cardinal Economic Development, Town of Grimshaw, Town of High Prairie, Town of Manning, , Energy Resources - AB, Town of Fairview, St. Isidore Economic Development, Town of Grimshaw, Peace Oilsands Secretariat, Northern Alberta Development Council, Alberta Energy, Community Health Services, Peace River Affordable Housing Coalition, Alberta Employment & Immigration, School Districts, Northern Lakes College, NAIT, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, and Oil & Gas Companies, Forestry and Agriculture.

A subcommittee of the municipalities, First Nations and Metis collaborated in the development/approval process through a number of meetings. The subcommittee took from 2005 to early 2008 to design the Terms of Reference, identify the impacts through a Forum in 2006 with 5 concurrent workshops in the following areas: Infrastructure, Housing, Health & Social Services and Education & Training.  
This forum launched the Synergy Group.

## IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE

### Plan:

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

We developed a Terms of Reference that identified our mandate, vision and direction.

Note: Terms of Reference attached.

### Policy:

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

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?

Procedures to guide the collaborative approach to dealing with these socio-economic impacts are currently being developed as an ongoing process.

Northern Sunrise County passed a resolution to initiate the formation of the Peace Oilsands Synergy group through staff resources and financial contributions.

It was implemented in 2005.

**Who:**

Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

Northern Sunrise County was initially responsible but now the partner municipalities share the responsibility.

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

**RESOURCES REQUIRED****Budget:**

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

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

The initial cost was approximately \$20,000 to date. The partner municipalities are in the process of providing additional funding for the hiring of a Secretariat to the Peace Oilsands Synergy Group. A budget will be developed in the fall of 2008 and additional funding might be pursued through the Province.

**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.")

Overall, Northern Sunrise County relied on its own staff (Economic Development Officer and Administrative Assistant) since 2005 to host meetings, coordinate the 2006 forum, and develop the Terms of Reference for the Synergy Groups. In 2008, staff from Northern Alberta Development Council (2 representatives), the Energy Resources Conservation Board (1 representative) and the Oilsands Sustainable Development Secretariat (1 representative), along with the Treasury Board became involved in guiding the Synergy Group.

**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?

Northern Sunrise County used its own internal resources - lending the information technology, equipment, meeting spaces, etc. to ensure the Synergy Group could have a platform to work from until it was formalized.

## 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.

Not at this time. A formal evaluation will take place within a year of the hiring of the Secretariat for the Peace Oilsands Synergy Group.

Tell us who was involved.

Not applicable.

### 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).

At every meeting we have had informal evaluations by invitation to stakeholder groups and rate payers. Also through the media and evaluations by the Oilsands Sustainable Development Secretariat, Northern Alberta Development Council and the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

### Performance measures:

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

Overall Parameters for Performance Measures include monitoring the achievements the goals, objectives and actual direct and indirect investment in the socio-economic impacts solutions. In addition:

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

- We are to be the discussion forum,
- We are to identify infrastructure to allow for an orderly development of the oil sands industry,
- We monitor the cumulative effects of developments,
- We provide the various agencies, governments, boards, etc. with sufficient information to allow rational decisions on the changes required,
- We assess the need for, and work to form, various committees. It is important to note that the Synergy group deals with the issues that directly impact industry in the oil sands region and discusses the related socio-economic impacts and infrastructure,
- We ask if we are the common source of information concerning the oil sands developments,
- We make it clear that we do not replace the authority, work of, or mandate of any regulatory body,
- We will continue to carry out surveys and request public response.

### 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?

As a result of the informal evaluations we will commence a pro-active campaign of marketing, data collection and the development of a Public Input Terms of Reference and a comprehensive Root Cause Analysis.

Our expectations are yet to be met as we have more work to do yet. We are confident that this practice is the right one and we will meet our expectations this year.

## 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.)

All municipalities within the Peace Oilsands are benefiting from the new stakeholder group's recommendations to support new investment, new innovation, and new residents to the region.

### Key Lessons:

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

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

Absolutely ensure ongoing stakeholder involvement and input through the design and implementation process.

Stakeholders, to be taken seriously must be consulted. The Peace Oilsand Synergy Group is a regional group with diverse representation of concerned government, citizens and community working together to resolve issues as they arise, be pro-active in looking ahead to see what other issues are going to be forthcoming and always have a plan to deliver on.

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

### 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?

Our advice is to think ahead, do scenario planning, stay on top of the current economic activities and resource extraction in the region, always assess, test and collaborate on present and future perceptions and how they guide us.

## PRACTICE UPDATES

### New Information:

Not applicable.

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.

## OTHER INFORMATION

### Suggestions:

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

### Documents & Attachments:

Peace Oil Sands Synergy Terms of Reference  
Terms of Reference

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).

\* 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](mailto: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?