

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

Name of Practice	ICE Villages Group
Date	8-July-08
Name of Municipality	<a href="#">Villages of Irma, Chauvin &amp; Edgerton</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.)

The Ice Villages group of the villages of Irma Chauvin & Edgerton who have joined together to form an organization to work on joint projects, grant applications and exchange of ideas, as well as research into best practices to deal with problems and issues. The current shared project is collecting and recording information for Tangible Capital Asset Project. Two college students have been hired under a joint sponsorship grant to work on this in each village. With guidance from our auditor, engineer and village administration the project is well on its way and it working fine. At the current rate of work all three villages will have their Tangible Capital Asset Project work completed by the end of summer.

**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 villages are finding it is more difficult to work alone. We are outside the golden corridor so attending provincial meetings and seminars is too expensive and take up to much time. If one village goes and brings information back all can share. The original purpose of the group was to cooperatively hire a bylaw enforcement officer. This was investigated and at present has been put on hold while other issues are being dealt with.

## 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...”).

We did no research on this. A need was seen and it is being addressed. Each village put in \$1.50 per capita to cover any shared expenses like speakers. Travel costs are paid by each village for their members to attend.

At present the project being considered is a regional operator's consortium proposed by Alberta Environment. We met with them about the concept and have put in place memorandums of understanding signed by each village. Talks on this will continue over the next few months. If all works out each village water/wastewater operator will be trained to operate, on a temporary as needed basis, an other village's system

A second phase of this project would be a joint application for electronic control systems to all our plants plus online communication and monitoring network. We will be working closely with Alberta Environment and Alberta Transportation on this.

**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.

The village councils and administration met last November to explore forming a group. Issues were discussed. It was decided to form a group. We have been meeting every 3 months since. We have had speakers in on topics of interest. The villages have contributed money to operate the group. The name given is the ICE Villages, using the first letter of each Village for ICE. One village has taken on the chairmanship and an other executive officer position. The projects and how they have been designed by the group is through members sharing ideas and suggestions. The basic principle is a problem or project must be seen as a need of the villages first. Then we research and plan a program to meet that need. They wanted an in house practice that must work for the members and not something designed from outside. We do not want to get bogged down in formalizes of writing a whole bunch of principles and guidelines that use up time and could restrict creativity. Our basic working premise is to define common issues or problems and then find a solution. Written goals and objectives relate to the current problem or issue rather than an overall set of objectives and goals. Time and funds are used for problem solving and project work rather than organizational rhetoric.

## GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE

### Authority:

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

The authority to create and operate the ICE Villages came through a resolution from each council. The second step was a per capita levy to cover any operational expenses. The villages already had a number of strengths to build on: close to same size, in same municipality, some common issues, need to make more effective use of money, we have the same engineer, same auditor, serviced by same government region, have the same employee concerns in regards to longevity, training. These just some of the items that make this type of arrangement so worthwhile.

### 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.

The ICE Village councillors all sit as members of the group and participate in the formal meetings held. Any project that requires input from each village like applying for a grant together or signing an agreement are taken back to each council for a resolution from each. ICE Villages make proposals for each council to consider on their own and it must be approved by each council before it any is done by the ICE Village group

**Consultation:**

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

Each council approved on their own whether to participate in the group. This is not a formal legalistic group but a functioning working group that exists to meet its needs.

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

## IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE

**Plan:**

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

One of the villages called the first meeting.  
We got together and decided to continue.  
We then decided some money was needed to cover ICE Villages expenses as all benefit from its actions.  
We looked at problems and needs then came up with this group to deal with them.

**Policy:**

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

This group has no effect upon each council, as each council made its own decision and passed a resolution to become a member project. Action requires specific approval by each council on its own through a resolution passed at a regular council meeting.

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?

This practice has been used for a year. It was implemented in stages, as we grow and the need arises. This will continue as long as each village feels a need is being served. Items on the agenda at present are Tangible Capital Asset Project , Operator's consortium, sharing a bylaw enforcement officer or finding another solution, possible infrastructure bidding at same time to get best price from contractors.

**Who:**

Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

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

This has been all three village with the mayor of Irma being the chairperson and CAO and staff from Edgerton doing the administration.

## 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?

It has taken very little money as an organization.

The ICE Villages applied for the 2008 joint sponsorship grant. \$39,000 has been received to pay for the Tangible Capital Asset Project. That grant should cover the total cost for each village. By applying together our money more than doubled.

There are no capital costs at present nor are any anticipated at this time

### 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.")

None each village council member took an active role and the managing village did the administration. It may be necessary later on to involve other staff expenses but that will be decided on as needed basis.

### 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?

No costs here. What was in place was enough

## 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.

Tell us who was involved.

We have been operating less than a full year but a formal evaluation will be done. Concern over time and costs, in relation to results obtained, projects completed and further needs will be addressed. It will likely be done in an informal discussion setting. It must be remembered the basis for this organization, it is need and project oriented so when this goal is not being met it will be considered not effective. All council members will be involved in evaluating the results in relation to cost in time and money.

### 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).

### 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

**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 first measure was success in receiving the sponsorship grant for Tangible Capital Asset Project projects employees were hire to do the work. Third the employees completed the work required and it has been approved by the auditor. The group has completed its first project! The operator's consortium is in the planning stage and the agreement will likely be completed by year end.

We have not been operating long enough to make any major changes

**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.)

We are just beginning this relationship but already we will have completed the Tangible Capital Asset Project which is a major issue for small municipalities. The signing of the memorandum of understanding for sharing utility operators also has a great potential for security of water plant operation.

**Key Lessons:**

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

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

Small communities strengthen their sustainability situation by cooperation. Grant dollars increase, staff knowledge can be shared, operational security for utilities can be improved, modernization of systems can be coordinated so it is easier to work together are just some examples.

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

This is a long term process. We will use this relationship to our benefit over the long term, it is just beginning!

**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?

All small municipalities in a region should consider working together to maximize their effectiveness in providing services to their community. Petty jealousies need to be set aside so a positive working environment can be built. Not everything can be shared but the big items like Tangible Capital Asset Project can be made manageable through cooperation. The sky is the limit start talking, keep a positive cooperative attitude and let the relationship develop over time. Keep control in your hands don't let outside forces direct the agenda. Use the relationship to your advantage for meet your needs!

## 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.

## OTHER INFORMATION

### Suggestions:

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

We are more than willing to share our experiences as we go along. There are no written documents. There is no need. We will use this relationship as we see the need.

### 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).

\* 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?