

November 6, 2009

Award celebrates innovative regional cooperation

Municipal creativity honoured by province

Edmonton... This year's recipients of the Minister of Municipal Affairs' Awards for Municipal Excellence display leadership and strategic thinking to address sustainability, urban and environmental planning, community safety, public education and municipal cooperation.

The 2009 recipient of the award for outstanding achievement is Mountain View County's Municipal Area Partnership, developed with the Towns of Carstairs, Didsbury, Olds and Sundre, and the Village of Cremona. The municipalities developed an innovative process for working together to seek sustainable and diversified tax bases under a regional umbrella.

"It is important that we recognize the great work in Alberta's municipalities in providing outstanding service to Albertans," said Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs. "I congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs' Awards for Municipal Excellence recipients and thank all those who submitted nominations for leading practices and for sharing their successes and creative ideas."

The 2009 recipient of the Minister's Award for Municipal Excellence in the Outstanding Achievement category will be recognized at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) convention on November 6 at the Telus Convention Centre in Calgary. The awards are presented annually at the fall conventions of the AUMA and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties.

Other 2009 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence recipients include: City of Lethbridge, County of Athabasca, Clearwater County and the Summer Villages of Argentia Beach, Crystal Springs, Golden Days, Grandview, Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach and Poplar Bay.

The Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence program began in 2002. Information on specific projects and the Municipal Excellence Network (MEnet) is available online at www.menet.ab.ca.

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Backgrounder: Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence recipients

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Backgrounder

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2009 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence recipients

Edmonton... The Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence program has four categories in addition to the Outstanding Achievement category: Innovation, Partnership, Safe Communities and Smaller Municipalities. A panel of elected officials and municipal administrators reviewed the award submissions. Nominations were submitted through the Municipal Excellence Network (MEnet).

- **Outstanding Achievement:** Mountain View County's Municipal Area Partnership (MAP) was developed in partnership with the Towns of Carstairs, Didsbury, Olds and Sundre, and the Village of Cremona. The municipalities worked together to develop an inter-municipal development framework and a memorandum of agreement template that address annexation; cost sharing for utilities, infrastructure and community services; public consultation; dispute resolution; and regional solidarity.
- **Innovation:** The County of Athabasca No. 12 is providing high-speed internet to their rural population. The County formed an innovative P3 economic model with neighbouring communities, local school boards, business and community groups, and launched a broad-based community wide campaign to make the system thrive. They now have high speed service to 85 per cent of those requesting it, with speed and pricing competitive with urban settings, at zero capital cost to the municipality. An Honourable Mention goes to the City of Calgary, which is the first Canadian municipality to use advanced web technology to provide detailed, up-to-date information on more than 500 capital projects to its citizens and funding partners.
- **Partnership:** The City of Lethbridge's Living Home project is a partnership among the City, Lethbridge College and Cedar Ridge Quality Homes to educate and demonstrate environmentally friendly building practices for the Lethbridge area's climate. An Honourable Mention goes to the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 and the Peace Wapiti School Division No. 76 for the Clairmont Community School and Wellington Resource Centre - a shared facility where the two partners work to meet the infrastructure requirements of multiple levels of government while providing a family-centered approach to service delivery.
- **Safe Communities:** Clearwater County's May Long Weekend Task Force is a multi-agency approach to enforcement and education relating to off-highway vehicle use, illegal liquor possession and consumption, and the environmental impacts on Crown land by recreational users. Honourable Mention goes to the City of Airdrie for its Anti-Vandalism Committee, a unique, pro-active approach to dealing with a common problem that focuses on educating the community. The committee creates, implements and evaluates sustainable strategies to ensure a safe and caring

community.

- **Smaller Municipalities:** The Summer Villages of Argentia Beach, Crystal Springs, Golden Days, Grandview, Ma-Me-O Beach, Norris Beach and Poplar Bay exemplify regional cooperation with their shared municipal services. Sharing administrative resources has allowed these seven municipalities to attract and retain skilled staff, share contractors, services and processes to introduce efficiencies, and allowed collaborative efforts to flourish.

The Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence program is associated with the Municipal Excellence Network (MEnet). Key objectives of MEnet are to share knowledge and recognize good work in Alberta municipalities. The Minister's awards directly support MEnet's objective to recognize and share leading practices among municipalities.

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