



**2013 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Category Worksheet**

**BEST PRACTICES, Civic Engagement**

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**Name of Local Government: Village of Lumby**

**Project/Program Title: Civic Engagement – Website Re-design**

**Project Summary:**

The Village of Lumby undertook (through a strategic priority setting process) a plan to increase civic engagement. The plan included several components: (1) website re-design, (2) community awareness through printed media (newsletters), and (3) local government information sharing (web based data sharing).

The website was re-designed to increase ease of navigation while implementing visual identification of the amenities available to the community to raise awareness of the amazing opportunities in the community. A popular addition is the “Have Your Say” feature on the website where residents can voice their concerns about any civic related matter to the local government which is then reviewed and followed up on by administration. Newsletters focused on civic matters showcasing community partners which changes with each edition. The local government information sharing was developed to better inform the public on all things related to the local government from annual reports, Council meeting minutes, agendas, meeting schedules, civic bylaws, water and wastewater reports, and other applicable information to better inform the public on the local government operations.

**Project Analysis**

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

Remember to include measurable results whenever possible.

**1. INSPIRATION**

What was the inspiration behind the program/project?

Improved customer value; the taxpayer and residents of the community are the customers. The inspiration is to inform the customers so that they become better informed on the local government processes and understand the decision making process which affects them on a daily basis.

## 2. GOALS

What did you set out to accomplish with the program/project? How effectively did you meet your goals?

The goal is to increase civic engagement through a multi stage approach – the 3 identified above. The “Have Your Say” component of the website has been very successful as we continually receive questions / comments / general inquiries which we promptly follow up on; the public has advised us that they are extremely happy with this – they are being heard. The newsletter constantly gets feedback from the community members to staff and Council on how it is a great tool to inform the community on what’s happening. The data information sharing is an ongoing process to continually strive to make information available to the public.

## 3. PARTICIPATION

a. How was the community involved in your program/project? Please provide measurable results.

The community was involved by way of feedback during the 2012 year – concerns identified to staff at the municipal office as well as directly to Council that civic engagement needed to be improved – especially the website. Staff researched the costs and best management practices and recommended a multi stage approach. This was discussed and approved at Council’s annual strategic priority setting process.

b. Tell us about all levels of teamwork involved in making this program/project possible. Include a description of any barriers or challenges it was necessary to overcome.

Staff researched best management practices (through other municipal websites) as well as through contacting other local governments to see what they were doing that worked and where opportunities may be present. Every community is unique and we tailored our approach to fit our community. The challenges and barriers are staff time in continually updating the website / date – information sharing as well as providing prompt responses to inquiries. These were overcome through the strategic priority setting process – Council decided it was a priority.

## 4. ECONOMIC IMPACT

How has the program/project saved the community money and/or resources or encouraged economic development?

Industry now has more information available to them when they view our website – links are in place to the Regional District, the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, etc. to assist with any potential questions a developer may. Economic Development is a key factor in our small community.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY

How has this program/project improved upon accountability to the community's citizens?

This project provides the community's citizens with the tools to be engaged – to “Have their Say”. The citizens have told us over and over that they just want to be heard and that the local government is listening. They understand that their individual perspective may not be implemented but want to ensure that their opinion / point of view are heard. This project has assisted the citizens in doing that.

6. AWARENESS

How has this program/project created more awareness in the community about local government actions?

The website continually is updated to reflect “What's New” as well as a calendar of events to advise the citizens of what's happening in the community. The newsletter assists in raising awareness of not only what the local government is doing, but also its community partners (such as the Community Resource Centre, the Health Services Society, the Seniors Society, the Lions Club, etc.)

7. INNOVATION

What makes this program/project innovative and creative?

It is innovative in that the public can become much more engaged than ever before – they can make a difference – they will be heard – the local government is trying to be more open and transparent through raising awareness and encouraging civic engagement. It is their community – we need to get them involved!

8. SUSTAINABILITY

What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (*e.g. staff time, resources, financial*)

Staff time, staff training, support through annual financial plan.

9. BEST PRACTICES

What sets this program/project apart as a winning idea? Why should it be considered a best practice, in comparison to other similar programs?

Too many citizens in almost every community raise the same concerns over and over – they want to have a say in how their community is operated. We (as local government) need to listen and continually strive to engage them through innovative processes – for Lumby this is a challenge as we are a small community of 1800 people with a small budget – makes this effort extremely challenging to accomplish at a high level. We accomplish this through dedication, ongoing training, and support from Council that civic engagement is a priority in Lumby.

#### 10. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

It is totally transferrable to any other local government – it is a matter of the level of priority the local government wishes to make it. It takes leadership from the community leaders to make it a reality, regardless of the budget and resources. We need to engage our citizens to make the community a better place to be.

#### 11. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

Do your homework – it took 6 months of design – re-design to get a format/style/design we were happy with. Each community is unique and each website should reflect that. iCompass was selected as our website designer and did an amazing job in assisting us to obtain our goals. Council and the community has been extremely happy with the website, the newsletter and the amount of new, useful, applicable information that is available to the public.

#### 12. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

Lumby was unique in that we are a small community with a limited budget and resources. We have a very small staff (the CAO is the webmaster, Corporate Officer, Deputy Approving Officer, Business Licence Inspector, etc.) so resources is a challenge; especially when you expect a high level of service in a quick timeframe. This project came down to priority - recognizing a need that the local government needed to be more open / transparent and communicate through several avenues to the citizens what the local government was doing and how we can engage our citizens to become more active in the community and the local government decision making process. This will always be a work in progress as we continually try to improve and move forward from lessons learned.