

UBCM COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2007 APPLICATION BOOKLET

NAME OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: **CITY OF LANGLEY**

PROJECT OR PROGRAM TITLE: **LANGLEY CITY EXPRESS**

SELECT YOUR CATEGORY: (CHOOSE ONE ONLY)

BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES, WEBSITE

BEST PRACTICES, ANNUAL REPORTING

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, SMALL COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, MID-SIZE COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, LARGE COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, REGIONAL DISTRICT

PARTNERSHIPS: EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION IN TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS

CONTACT PERSON: **KEN OGDEN**

CONTACT TITLE: **MANAGER OF
INFORMATION SERVICES**

EMAIL: **KOGDEN@LANGLEYCITY.CA**

PHONE: **604-514-2811**

FAX: **604-530-4371**

BY MAKING THIS APPLICATION, I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL MATERIALS WILL BE KEPT BY UBCM AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING BY OTHERS THROUGH THE UBCM COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS LIBRARY.

SIGNATURE:



NAME (PRINT): **KEN OGDEN**

DATE: **7/25/07**

APPLICATION CHECKLIST:

Remember to send 8 copies of your entire application package for distribution to the Selection Committee. **EACH copy should contain:**

A completed application form

A one-paragraph summary of the project/program being submitted

A five-page summary report (max. 5 pgs)

A letter from the Mayor supporting the application

IF APPLYING TO ANNUAL REPORTING:

A copy of the Annual Report

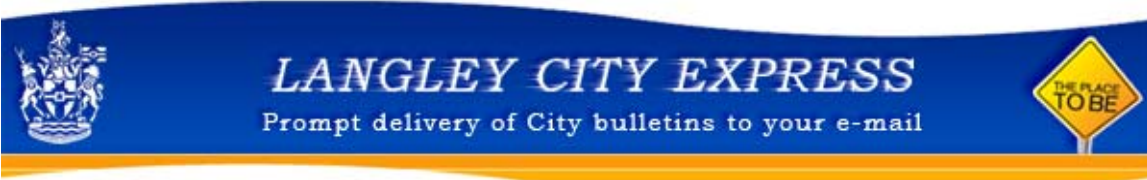
IF APPLYING TO PARTNERSHIPS:

A copy of the partners list

In addition to the eight complete application packages, please include:

One CD/electronic copy of the entire submission

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2007



UBCM Community Excellence Awards: Best Practices

Langley City Express Opt-in E-mail System

Description

Langley City Express is an opt-in e-mail system where website visitors can subscribe to electronic bulletins relating to one or more predefined content categories. City employees use a web interface to create bulletins from a standard template and then e-mail subscriber groups based on the content subject.

Background

In June 2007, the City of Langley received the results of its 2007 Community Survey from Ipsos Reid. The results indicated that 12% of City residents would prefer to receive information from the City by e-mail. The City had been researching opt-in e-mail systems and these survey results provided the justification to move forward with the initiative. Xplorex Systems representatives performed a demonstration of their hosted solution to the City's Senior Management Team and everyone agreed that the user-friendly system would be ideal for content creators in various departments to e-mail their own bulletins. The City worked with Xplorex staff to create several web pages that are required for the functioning of the system and also build the template used for creating bulletins. The *Langley City Express* was launched on June 20, 2007.

Benefits

The benefits of the *Langley City Express* system are:

- Efficiency - The City's Administration Department use to fax press releases to several media outlets. Now they can quickly send a press release bulletin using *Langley City Express* to all subscribers including the media outlets.
- Reach – The City produces a periodic newsletter that is mailed by Canada Post to all City residents. The *Langley City Express* extends the City's reach to people in neighboring communities who would like to be kept abreast of City news and events. In fact, 45% of our subscribers do not reside in the City of Langley!

- **Timeliness** – The City of Langley’s seasonal recreation guide is the most frequently downloaded document from the City’s website. *Langley City Express* subscribers are the first to receive the highly anticipated guide and no longer have to keep checking our website to see if it is posted yet.
- **Flexibility** – Content can be produced at any time and scheduled to be e-mailed on a later date. There is also no limit to the number of subscribers, content categories, e-mail templates or bulletins that can be setup.
- **Cost-effectiveness** – This is the perfect application for a hosted solution. The setup fee was “in the hundreds” and the monthly operating cost compares to that of a cell phone.
- **Improved Customer Service** – Most businesses that have a presence on the Internet have an opt-in mail system to keep in touch with customers. Municipalities are really no different in that we need to distribute information to our customers in a timely manner. The City of Langley prides itself in our business-like approach to customer service!
- **Ease of Use** – It takes about fifteen minutes to train someone to use the system. The e-mail lists are self-managing in that the subscribers themselves can opt-in or out at any time, although staff can manually add or remove subscribers as needed.
- **Reporting** – There are extensive reports available that can be used for marketing purposes, for example: we can see how many recipients clicked on a link that was contained within a bulletin.

Applicability

Ipsos Reid reported in the 2007 City of Langley Community Survey that 45% of the respondents had visited the City’s website in the past 12 months and that the norm for this statistic is 43% based on all the other municipalities they have surveyed. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that, as was found in the City of Langley, around 12% of residents in any other community would prefer e-mail as the method of communication with their municipality.

In addition, the number of respondents reporting that they had visited the City website was up 12% from the 2004 community survey. This is further evidence of a trend that we already know: Internet and e-mail use is increasing. Over time an increasing number of people will want to receive municipal bulletins by e-mail.

Transferability

Any municipality wishing to implement an opt-in e-mail system can do so with ease using Xplorex or other vendor’s hosted solutions. Software can also be purchased for those municipalities wishing to implement an in-house system.

Subscribing to the *Langley City Express*

The *Langley City Express* subscription page is accessed from a link on our community web site located at <http://www.city.langley.bc.ca> where visitors are taken to the following page on the Xplorex server.



Please fill in the form below to sign up for our newsletter:

* Indicates required fields.

First name

Last name

E-mail

Which area do you live in?

Which group would you like to sign up for?

- City Newsletter
- Community Events
- Langley Youth
- Press Releases
- Recreation Guide

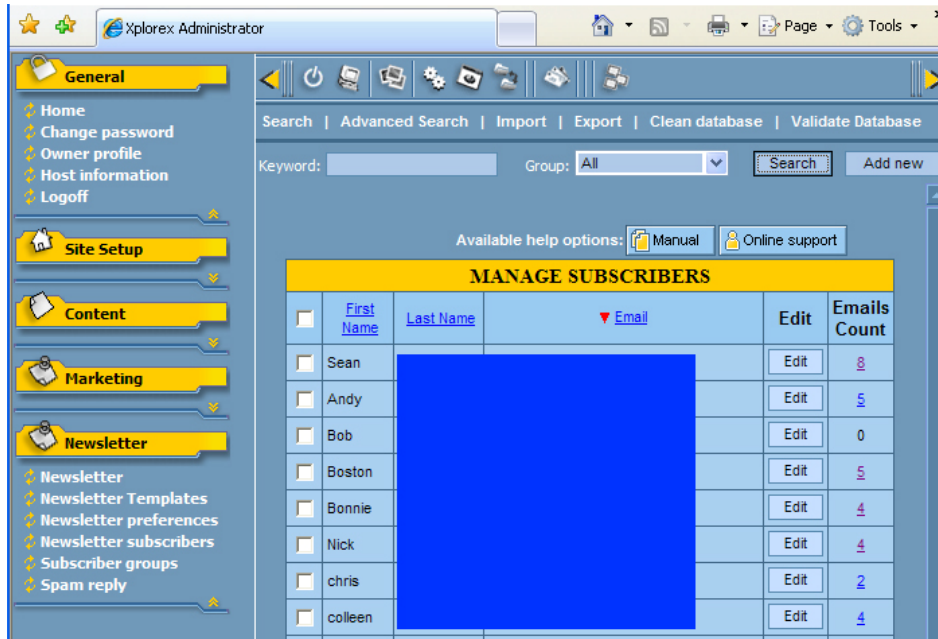
[Unsubscribe](#)

We collect the subscriber's name so that we can use the data to personalize content of our bulletins. Since we ask what area the subscriber lives in we can track how successful we are at "extending our reach". The subscriber can select one or more groups to subscribe to and we are hopeful that more groups will be created as additional City departments begin using the system.

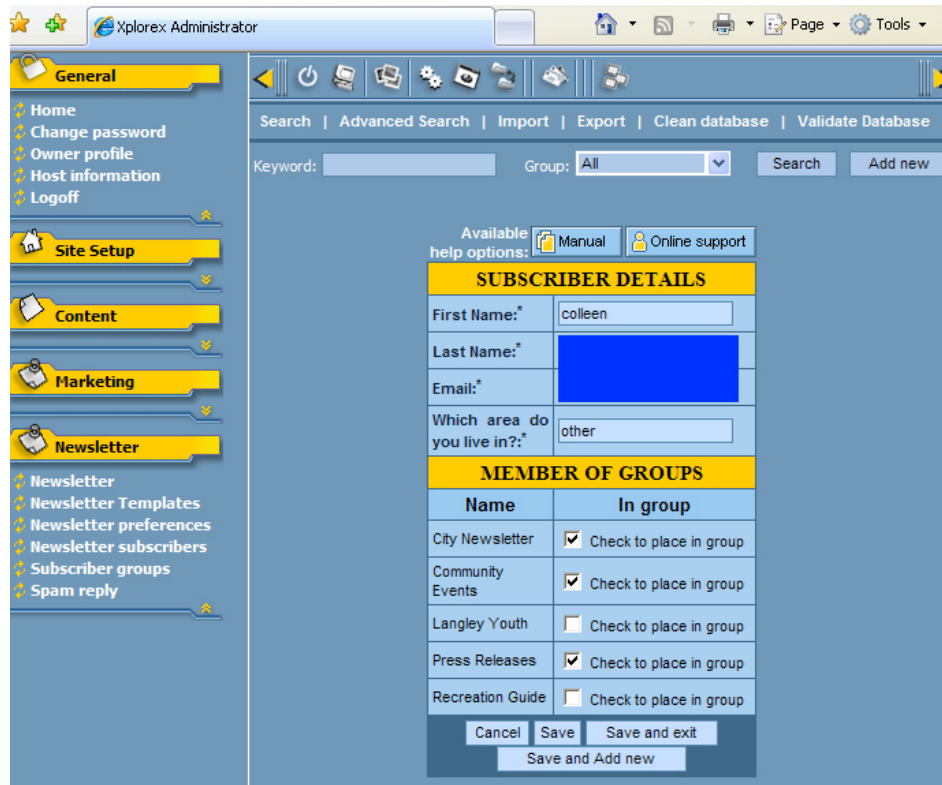
Subscribers may unsubscribe through a link on this page or by clicking a link contained in the bulletins themselves.

Using the Xplorex System

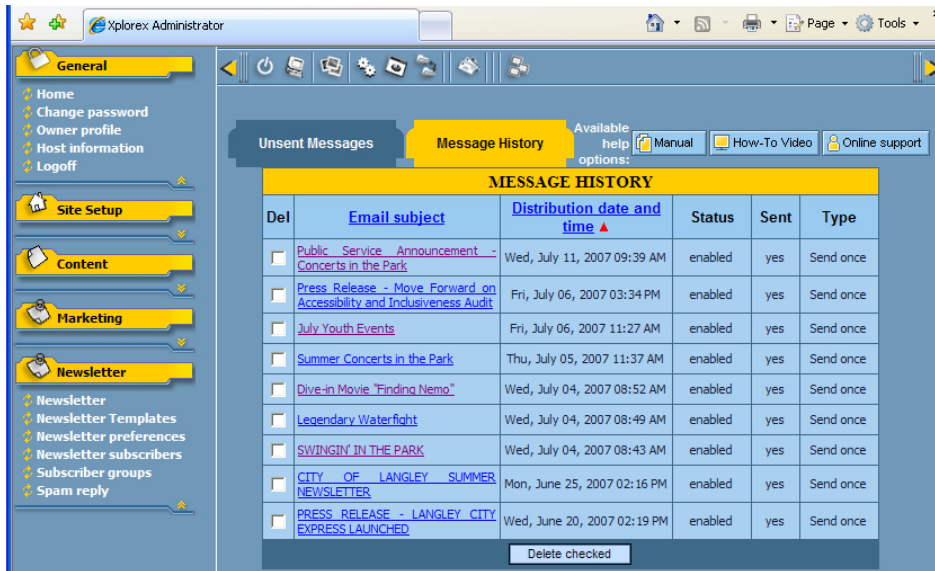
On the following pages we have included screenshots to show how easy it is for City staff to use the Xplorex Administrator website. Please note that we have blocked out personal information.



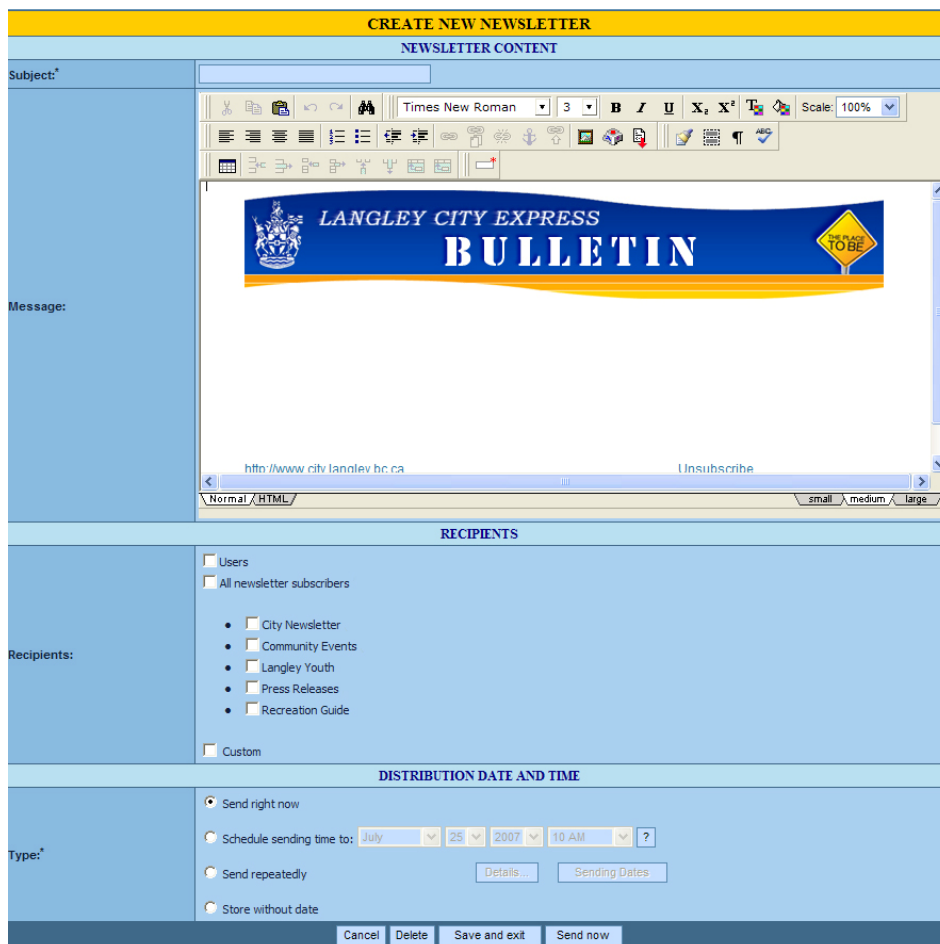
On the Manage Subscribers page we can filter subscribers by group and see how many bulletins we have sent them



On the Subscriber Details page we can view details and make manual updates



On the Message History page we see a record of our activity and we can gain access to the content and details of prior mailings



On the Create Newsletter page our template is preloaded into an editor. Staff paste information from a source document, select recipients then send.

A Sample *Langley City Express* Bulletin

From: newsletter@cityoflangley.xplorex.com

Sent: Wed 6/20/2007 2:19 PM

To: Ken Ogden

Cc:

Subject: PRESS RELEASE - LANGLEY CITY EXPRESS LAUNCHED



CITY OF LANGLEY ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCHING OF "LANGLEY CITY EXPRESS" ONLINE SERVICE

Langley City, BC - June 20, 2007

The City of Langley is pleased to announce the launching of a new online service called the "**Langley City Express**", an opt-in e-mail system that promises prompt delivery of City bulletins to subscriber e-mail addresses. Mayor Peter Fassbender states that "this initiative is a means of keeping our residents more connected to what is happening in the community". He continues by saying that "this movement is in response to feedback from the 2007 Community Survey, in which 12% of respondents indicated e-mail as their preferred method of communication with the City". The survey also found that 45% of the respondents had used the City's website in the past year, up from 33% in 2004.

In addition to being the most efficient way for Langley City residents to receive bulletins, the Langley City Express will also benefit residents from neighboring communities, making information regarding City of Langley community events and recreation programs more readily accessible to them.

Visitors to the City's website (<http://www.city.langley.bc.ca/>) can subscribe to one or more groups and receive bulletins by e-mail. The subscriber groups currently available for subscription are: City Newsletter, Community Events, Langley Youth Services, Press Releases and Recreation Guide.

For more information, contact 604-514-2811.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Ken Ogden
Manager of Information Services
City of Langley
Tel 604-514-2811
Email kogden@langleycity.ca

Summary

Our 2007 Community Survey identified that a significant number of residents preferred to receive City of Langley information by e-mail. The City responded by implementing a cost-effective solution that met the needs of our community and extends our reach to interested parties beyond our borders.

There are many benefits to the system including improved efficiency and customer service. Any municipality can achieve these benefits by implementing their own opt-in e-mail system and we are happy to assist them by providing information about our setup.

We believe that opt-in e-mail systems such as the one we have implemented will become a 'Best Practice' for municipal government communications. Our being awarded a UBCM Community Excellence Award for Best Practices will increase awareness so other municipalities may benefit as we have.

Thank you for your consideration.

CITY OF
LANGLEY



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

City Hall - 20399 Douglas Crescent, Langley, BC Canada V3A 4B3
Telephone: 604-514-2801 Fax: 604-514-2838

July 24, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Langley City Council, I am pleased to write this letter in support of the City of Langley's application for a UBCM Community Excellence Award in the Best Practices category.

We at the City of Langley are very proud of the innovative and progressive approach we take in keeping our residents and those in neighboring municipalities connected to what is happening in our community. Langley City Express has already proven itself to be a successful tool for this purpose and we are pleased to support this application. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
City of Langley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Fassbender".

Peter Fassbender
Mayor

