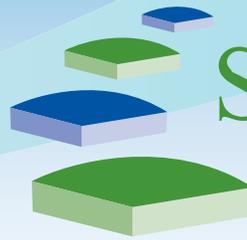


SIMPLE AS DIRT TABER, ALBERTA



Taber discovers planning is simple as dirt

Folks in Taber know their dirt. They've grown up, after all, surrounded by a rich agricultural heritage. So when they required a model for sustainability planning, they returned to what they knew best to find the "perfect metaphor" for community process: Simple As Dirt.

"Layers of soil are very interdependent of each other much the same as members of a community," says Taber Mayor Ray Bryant. "The Town of Taber's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan was a timely exercise that provided an opportunity for community input. It clearly brings into focus what's needed to be sustainable."

Leading up to its adoption of the plan in January 2009, the town, in meetings with stakeholders, discovered that social elements must be part of most decisions made at the council level. That allowed council to better understand what citizens wanted in regards to the future direction of their town. From that realization, it developed a mechanism for change in its development and planning process.

"Simple As Dirt is an example of the collaboration and innovation that Taber represents, and reflects the spirit and creativity of the residents, businesses and industries," says Tania Sprong, Regional Sustainability Co-ordinator for Taber-Vauxhall-Barnwell.

Using the Simple As Dirt concept, the town has completed its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association chose Taber as the lead community in a regional sustainability planning project that includes Vauxhall and Barnwell; Simple As Dirt will be used in all three communities.

Quote is from the town:

As the town itself explains: "Dirt is a metaphor for how a community should be built: from the bottom up. Dirt itself has an incredibly complex organic structure with multiple layers that, though distinct from one another in composition and function, blend into one another and are influenced and changed by anything that affects any other layer. It is a marvelously reciprocal system. From a practical (and rural) standpoint: it's just dirt and dirt is something we all understand. It's not some academic theory developed in isolation; we interact with it, we live with it, we need it."

Simple As Dirt positions Taber as a leader in small-town sustainability in southern Alberta and makes an innovative contribution to the growing body of sustainability research.

Did you know:

- Taber set upon a child's game that through the use of an ice cream parfait, playfully demonstrated the effects of surface contaminants on groundwater. Taber applied its small rural urban centre social infrastructure and networking filter against the child's game and Simple As Dirt was born.
- Taber was chosen by the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to be the lead community in a regional sustainability planning project that includes Taber, Vauxhall and Barnwell.
- Simple as Dirt was selected for presentation at the Northern Alberta Development Council's Challenge North Conference in 2009.

For more information contact:

Town of Taber

4900A - 50 Street
Taber, Alberta T1G 1T1
Ph: 403-223-5519
Fax: 403-223-5530
Email: town@taber.ca
Website: www.taber.ca

SouthGrow Regional Initiative

P.O. Box 1202,
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4A4
Phone: (403) 394-0615
Toll Free: 1-888-989-8488
Email: info@southgrow.com
Website: www.southgrow.com

