

CAMA Awards 2011

Town of Okotoks, AB

2011 Willis Award for Innovation, Certificate of Merit

(Population between 20,001 and 100,000)

Town of Okotoks Water Management Plan

An innovative water management plan has allowed the Town of Okotoks to achieve one of the lowest water consumption rates per capita in Canada while experiencing population growth. The plan is a model for sustainable development and regional environmental stewardship.

The Town of Okotoks developed an innovative Water Management Plan (WMP) with bold water conservation targets in 2002, at a time when there was a perception of water abundance in Southern Alberta. In 2006, when the Alberta Government established a moratorium on new water licenses on the South Saskatchewan River Basin, Okotoks found itself in a unique situation.

The community was experiencing rapid population growth with a more constrained water supply from the Sheep River. Luckily, the main objective of the town's Water Management Plan was to provide a safe and reliable water supply to the residents, institutions and businesses now and into the future.

The key strategies of the WMP were to promote community wide water conservation and efficiency. The plan set a bold responsible water consumption target of 318L (70 imperial gallons) per capita per day. Eight specific goals are contained within the WMP, each stating specific targets which are annually evaluated, reported and revised.

Through vigorous sustainable water management practices, the Town reduced its annual gross water consumption from 329L per capita/day in 2009 to 295L per capita/day in 2010 while its population grew from 21,890 people to 23,240 people. Water management has become a strong part of Okotoks' corporate identity and community culture over the past eight years and the community is well positioned for the future.