

# Municipalities Seeking Viability

Edgerton

## Background: Where We Have Been

### Some Key Points on Edgerton:

- Edgerton is situated outside of the golden corridor of Calgary/Edmonton and strongly identifies with remote communities
- Economic drivers in Edgerton's region include agriculture, oil & gas, and military
- Edgerton is located in the only constituency in Alberta without a major population centre
- Constituency has the most communities, but one of the lower populations which means lots of systems and facilities
- Experience of 10 years of no funding with the disappearance of the Municipal Assistance Grants (MAG) in the early 90's
- Lack of provincial funding into a community leads to dependence on utilizing reserves; in that scenario reserves are not so easily replaced and diminish quickly

### Suggestion:

- Consistent, long-term funding outside of property taxes is needed
- Communities need to think and work outside of the box
- Communities need to work together and have strong, unified representation through associations such as the AUMA
- Solutions need to address the individual needs of various communities
- We cannot and should not look for a "one-size" fits all solution



## Future Challenges

### **What will happen with decreasing MSI?**

- Our communities will be on their own. If you cannot do it for yourself, no one else will.
- Infrastructure deficit will continue to grow and residents will be put in jeopardy as there is no money to fix or improve current infrastructure.
- Dissolving communities only transfers responsibility for the services and systems in that community to another
- Ultimately, systems still need to be maintained, upgraded, replaced, and repaired so how do dissolutions solve anything?



## Strengths

- Working Together: Small Communities Conference – Edgerton; Legal; Turner Valley/Black Diamond; Swan Hills; Forestburg.
- This conference belongs to the communities rather than an organization or province.
- Small Community Network – strength in numbers and higher volume in our collective voice.
- SCC regional partnerships – ICE projects completed; ICE projects in works and future plans.
- Small town atmosphere that larger centres want and are struggling to develop and/or maintain – we need to sell this to attract and grow our communities.



## Opportunities

- Working with the province on a more proactive basis.
- Changes in linear property tax assessment
- Provincial Sales tax.
- Community Bonds – can our residents invest in their own communities rather than outside the community?
- Marketing the “rurbans” to the “urbans.”
- Working together to brainstorm new approaches to our current challenges.



## Help is Needed

- Securing reliable, long-term funding for municipal infrastructure.
- Finding more support for innovative thinking and solutions that address the needs of small communities (including moving to funding formulas that are not calculated per capita).
- Streamlining the grants process and removing redundancies.



## Final Thoughts

- MSI funding is a flagship program for our Premier and was the major focus of his campaign in the last provincial election. We need to hold the government accountable to this promise.
- \$220,000,000 was removed from MSI/AMIP for the 2009 with no concrete accountability or indication on where that money went. That cannot happen again.
- Bottom line: MSI funding is essential to all communities in Alberta, none more so than our small communities. We all need, as individual communities and collectively as an Association, to tell our Premier and our provincial government that this funding must be maintained.
- We may be the smallest of Alberta's communities; however, collectively, we have a voice that can and needs to be heard.
- Remember: The mighty oak tree is just the little nut that held its ground!