



District of Squamish
2012 Local Government Awareness Week
Communications Plan
Submitted by Christie Smith, Communications Manager

Overview

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), in partnership with CivicInfo BC, Local Government Management Association, Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development, Ministry of Education, BC School Trustees Association and the Public Works Association of BC are working in partnership to promote Local Government Awareness Week in British Columbia from May 20 – 26, 2012.

This is an ongoing initiative with the goal to generate awareness and educate the public about the roles and responsibilities of local government and to encourage the public to participate in local government processes, including voting in local elections and Town Hall meetings.

The District of Squamish will participate once again by encouraging local residents to take part in a number of activities aimed at building awareness about the important role local government plays in the community.

Objectives

To increase Squamish residents' knowledge of local government.

To enhance interest in the Squamish community's core infrastructure.

To promote awareness of the many important projects municipal staff members are working on.

To meet community engagement goals outlined in the 2012 Communications Plan:

To reinforce the District's brand that encapsulates transparency, responsiveness, trust, productivity, sensitivity and intelligence.

To enhance community engagement in constructive environments that encourage both conversations and information exchange.

To build and nurture relationships throughout the community and enrich the District's reputation across the province.

Key Messages

The following messages will be incorporated in to media interviews, press releases, marketing materials and other event communications:

- Communities with the greatest and most diverse citizen participation are often resilient and strong.
- The District of Squamish believes that engaging citizens to address common issues is essential for educated decision-making.
- The District views careful planning and building of a long-term community engagement infrastructure as a priority.
- The District of Squamish encourages civic pride and development of long-term working relationships for the future, which will help our community develop in a sustainable manner.
- A career working with a municipality provides a stimulating, enriching and challenging environment that enables individuals to learn, grow and help their community every day.
- Residents play an important role in shaping their community through participation in Town Hall meetings, the voting process and other municipal activities.

Research

- Work previously done by other municipalities was analyzed.
- A need for greater community engagement was identified as part of the 2012 Communications Plan.
- A communications audit was performed as part of the 2012 Communications Plan and citizen engagement was identified as a key area of focus.
- *Ipsos Reid* Citizen Satisfaction survey carried out in May, 2012 with 86 respondents as of May 11th.
- Teachers were asked about their students' local government knowledge before class presentations (and afterwards).
- The Chief newspaper will track number of hits on website for Mayor for a Day contest and also Twitter hits.

Target Audience

- Community/Resident/Service/Business Groups
- Local Schools
- Local Governments
- Squamish Chamber of Commerce
- Members of Parliament (National and Provincial)
- Media

Tactics

A number of tactics will be utilized to communicate program objectives.

- Invite four students from the Student Leadership Class from Howe Sound Secondary to attend a Committee of the Whole meeting on May 22nd, including lunch with Council and the Mayor.
- The Mayor for a Day winner is invited to have a pizza lunch with students from the Student Leadership Class, Council and the Mayor. The boardroom table will be covered with brown paper and pens for the students to write on. Questions will be written on the paper to kick off conversation, such as “What would you do if you were Mayor for a Day?”, “How can you make your community a better place to live?” and “Name four things that Councillors do.” Gift bags will be handed to students and the Mayor for a Day winner that include items such as treats, District tattoos, pens and Canada flag stickers.
- May 17th: Student Leadership Group is sent the District’s Parks and Recreation Plan and compiles questions to ask Council on May 22nd.
- The Communications Manager will deliver six presentations to local schools grades 5 – 7 from May 14 – 17th, outlining how local government works. Invite students to send in their entries to the Mayor for a Day (May 17th deadline) contest and also to attend the Public Works Open House on May 23rd. Props (wigs, scarves, beards and moustaches) will be used with the school children to engage them in running their own “Council meeting” where they make a decision on whether or not the city should have a new turf field. Students receive LGA Certificates of Participation and District tattoos.
- The Mayor for a Day receives a t-shirt that reads “Mayor for a Day”, with the District’s logo and also the Local Government Awareness logo on it.
- The Mayor for a Day contest winner receives a framed congratulatory certificate.
- The Mayor for a Day is toured around downtown Squamish to introduce them to merchants and enable them to ask questions and share concerns. The Mayor for a Day compiles these for the Mayor of Squamish.
- Invite the Mayor for a Day winner to be interviewed with the Mayor on *Mountain FM* on Wednesday, May 22rd at 8:05am.
- Work with the Chief newspaper to have the winning student’s essay published in the newspaper, a photo with a brief story of their experience published, and the student’s essay published each week. An article is published in the Chief local newspaper a week prior to LGA to promote the Mayor for a Day contest. The Communications Manager will comment in response to residents’ comments online in response to the article.
- Ask the local Chief newspaper if the District can link to their student articles from the District website.

- Local Government Awareness Week link on home page.

Create a page that links to:

- The Chief's stories they publish about LGA activity (Mayor for a Day, Students in Committee of the Whole meeting)
 - Photos taken at Public Works Week, LGA activities
 - Link to *Mountain FM* interview with Mayor for a Day posted May 23 – 26
 - News release
 - Fact Sheet
 - Mayor for a Day poster
 - Committee of the Whole meeting agenda or Council feed
 - Government Trivia Contest Question – post from May 14 – 26
 - Post winner of Trivia contest from May 28 – June 1 on our home page in place of the logo.
- Run a local government trivia contest question on our website. Winner receives 10 passes to Brennan Park Pool.
 - The public is invited to tour the Public Works Yard on May 23rd as part of Public Works Week.
 - Students are encouraged to bring an item for the *Squamish Food Bank* to the Public Works Yard.
 - Elementary students attending Public Works on May 23rd for a tour of the Yard will be preparing numerous flower baskets (with supervision). Two baskets will be donated for raffle, with proceeds going to the *Squamish Food Bank*. Draw date will be Wednesday May 23rd at 4pm. Tickets will be \$3 each or two tickets for \$5.00.
 - Elementary students visit the Public Works Yard in the morning and have lunch at the Yard.
 - The Mayor will be present in the Public Works Yard at noon for a cake cutting and speech.
 - The District will submit an application for the Union of BC Municipalities 2012 Community Excellence Award for "Best Practices, Civic Engagement."
 - Photos of all activities will be sent to local media.

Media Outreach

- Media release to media
- Advertisement in local newspaper, The Chief
- Mention in weekly ENews the week of May 14th
- Mountain FM ads (21 tags per week)
- Interview with the Mayor and the Mayor for a Day winner on May 23rd

Evaluation Measures

Feedback questionnaire on website.

Media coverage: tone, number of articles, media impressions.

Mountain FM Facebook site, Chief newspaper coverage and Twitter analysis will be carried out.

Essays submitted by students will be analyzed in terms of number received and expressed interest.

Questions will be distributed to teachers before and after presentations regarding the effectiveness of the presentation.

A government trivia contest question will be posted via ENews on website at www.squamish.ca. Number of responses will be recorded.

Note: The District has distributed an RFP for a consultant to redesign the District's website. At this time, social media outreach is limited to the District's basic website. Plans to create a cutting edge District website page and branch out to other social media platforms are rolling out as part of the strategic 2012 Communications Plan presented to Council in April 2012.