



*Deep Roots
Greater Heights*

District of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maple Ridge Earns UBCM Award for Social Media Engagement

Maple Ridge, BC: On Thursday, September 19, 2013, at the Union of BC Municipalities Annual Conference, the District of Maple Ridge received an Honourable Mention in the Best Practices, Social Media Award category recognizing the approach the District took to inform citizens about issues relating to the 2012 Spring Freshet.

In June of 2012, the District, as with all other communities in the area, were notified that the Fraser River was cresting at very high levels due to the perfect storm of a large snow pack and a late thaw that was accelerated by high amounts of rainfall. Our Emergency Operations team went to work, and within a few days made preparations for the scenario that was unfolding. One of the new tools that we deployed to spread the word was the District's social media assets on Facebook and Twitter. The UBCM Award recognizes the creative way that social media was integrated into the District's communication and engagement with citizens.

Mayor Daykin noted, "I know that a number of communities pushed information out using social media, but what our community did was create a high level of integration between our website at mapleridge.ca and our social media sites. This included daily photo galleries that were posted to allow members of the community to see how the high water levels were impacting various parts of the community and to show citizens some of the work that was going on in the background during the crisis. In 2007, we were inundated with phone calls and some neighbourhoods had to deal with 'disaster tourists' driving down to take a look. In 2012, the call volumes did not materialize, and folks who were curious stayed away due to the amount of information that we were able to provide online. I would like to congratulate

our team here at the District for their innovative approach to engaging citizens.”

Fred Armstrong, Manager Corporate Communications, said, “As our flood plan unfolded I was struck by all the work that was happening in a very compressed time period, and since I always carry a camera around I started snapping pictures. In particular, I was inspired by the work of our Operations Centre who deployed almost a kilometre of temporary dyking at two points in the Albion Area. I felt that members of the community would benefit from seeing more of the work that happens in the background than is typically provided in these circumstances.” He continued, “Working with my colleague Jacquie Bergmann, we quickly reconfigured part of the District website to create a ‘one stop’ portal for information and links to information including the BC River Forecast Centre, Environment Canada and our Facebook and Twitter pages. It was very gratifying to support the work of our first responders and field crews in Operations to make sure citizens had the information that they needed to be prepared for the worst, at home or from their office.”

By providing the District social media sites and a ‘hashtag’ #FraserMR, to citizens in the impacted areas, they were able to use their mobile devices to get notifications when new alerts were posted and ask questions or provide comments as the emergency unfolded.

Mayor Daykin noted, “If you were looking from the outside you would have thought our community had a ton of folks updating all this information, but the reality is that a small group of people, two or three, were able to do this work by using technology and creativity, while at the same time doing their day-to-day work. In an emergency our citizens expect us to take action, and they are looking for information. This reflects our readiness to meet that expectation.”

The District encourages all citizens to ‘like’ the District’ Facebook page or follow us on Twitter. To sign up, please visit, [Facebook.com/yourmapleridge](https://www.facebook.com/yourmapleridge) and [Twitter.com/yourmapleridge](https://twitter.com/yourmapleridge).

For more information about the award or communications program please contact Fred Armstrong at farmstrong@mapleridge.ca or call 604-467-7452.

For Facebook gallery examples:

- <http://on.fb.me/1aMtbP4>
- <http://on.fb.me/15D0NYJ>

