

I. OVERVIEW

The Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Center is in its third year of operation and is continuously taking on new challenges. To help in the adaptation of new challenges and experiences a plan is needed. The following report is an outline of future actions needed, by examining the past and identifying future needs.

II. PURPOSE AND GOALS

Purpose

The Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Center is dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life for Lacombe citizens through the provision of water orientated recreational opportunities.

Goals

- provide safe, enjoyable aquatic experiences.
- provide educational opportunities for users.
- ensure accessibility to all Lacombe citizens.
- involve Lacombe citizens in the Aquatic Center program development and implementation.
- identify the needs of user groups and potential users.
- provide a clean, well maintained environment for users.

- ensure the promotion of all programs.
- provide various programs and opportunities for the Aquatic Center users.

III. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

A. Historical Background

The Kinsmen Aquatic Center started construction in 1995 and consists of three pools. (Main, Teach and Whirl pools) The grand opening was held on April 22, 1996 and since that day many changes have taken place and will continue, because of the change of user needs and operating costs.

The major change this year was the hiring of the present Aquatic Supervisor in July 1997. The first month of this event was very hard on the aquatic staff, recreation staff and the aquatic supervisor. As we all know change is difficult, yet the entire department has adapted quite well.

Another change that the Aquatic Center is presently going through is the development of this marketing plan. This is a positive change that will indirectly effect the Aquatic Center and Recreation staff. Through the development of this plan, improvements relating to programming, facility appearance and public customer service will be made.

Things that must be taken into consideration that affect the running of an indoor pool compared to an outdoor pool are:

1. Programs

- 1) Program opportunities and attendance increase because the weather factor is eliminated
- 2) The competition between programming and prices of the facility becomes an increased factor compared to other indoor facilities.
- 3) Program planning, implementation, evaluation, follow up and structure become the means to the success of programs.

2. Staffing

- 1) Staff costs increase because:

- operation season is longer
 - staff are no longer seasonal
 - attendance increase calls for more staff hours
- 2) Staff market is increased from high school students to include the working person.
 - 3) Number of staff required increases because of longer operation season.
 - 4) The supervisory staff hours and number increase to keep the efficiency of pool administration, allow for program structure, and increase promotion of the facility.

3. **Operating**

- 1) Season length of an indoor pool can be year round compared to three or four months of an outdoor pool.
- 2) Operating expenses increase when the season is extended.
- 3) Chemical expenses increase because the sun can no longer be used as a chlorine stabilizer and the season of operation is longer.
- 4) The users dollar is distributed throughout the year rather than a few months.

Some challenges include:

1. **Programs**

- 1) Offering a variety of new programs each year to keep the public interested.

2. **Staff**

- 1) Keeping the staff turn over to a minimum.
- 2) Getting people to work without the guarantee of hours when they are not in school yet able to work daytime during the school

months.

3. Operating

- 1) Having consistency in the pool schedule throughout the year.
- 2) Keep costs of programs, rentals and lessons competitive with those of other surrounding facilities.

B. Consumer Analysis

The Aquatic Center presently works with the following market groups, offering the listed programs:

1. Preschoolers (0 - 5 years)
 - Aquatot Red Cross Program (Level 1 - 3)
 - Parent & Preschool Swim (6& under)
 - Preschool Lessons (afternoons)
 - Pool Kids (4-8 years)
 - Birthday parties (leisure swim)
2. Children (6 - 12 years)
 - Aquaquest Red Cross Program (Level 1 - 12)
 - Junior Lifeguard Club (8-15 years)
 - Pool Kids (4-8 years)

- Synchronize Swimming
 - Dolphin Swim Club
 - Birthday Parties (leisure swim)
3. Teens (13 - 17 years)
- Lifesaving Courses (Bronze Medallion & Cross, Senior Resuscitation, Lifesaving 1,2,3)
 - Stroke Improvement
 - Scuba Certification Clinic
 - Junior Lifeguard Club (8-15 years)
 - Volunteer Lifeguard Program
 - Volunteer Instructor Program
4. Adults (18 - 64 years)
- Aqua Adult Red Cross Program (Level 1 - 3)
 - Lane Swim
 - Fitness Classes (Aquacise, Aquajog, Aquacircuit, Arthritis)
5. Seniors (65 + years)
- Fitness Classes (Aquacise, Aquajog, Aquacircuit, Arthritis)

6. Families

- Family Swim

Reasons for Aquatic Activity

- socialize, meet people, be with friends and family
- relax
- lose weight
- education
- get active and stay fit
- future employment in aquatics
- unorganized activity
- forced to by parents

C. Competitive Analysis

The Aquatic Center is one of many places for the leisure market to go. The Aquatic Center competes with minor hockey, figure skating, gymnastics, bowling, school sports, television, computer use, movie theatres and other personal interest areas for time and money. In addition, the Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Center competes with Canadian University College pool, three Red Deer pools and Ponoka pool in relation to the availability of the facility, programs and cost.

IV. MARKETING OBJECTIVES

A. Consumer Objectives

1. To promote safe, enjoyable aquatics.
2. To increase positive awareness of the Aquatic Center and the programs.
3. To develop our programs with great effectiveness.
4. To establish the Aquatic Center as the public=s lifestyle choice.

B. Sales Objectives

	1996 Actual	1997 Actual	1998 Projected
Red Cross Lessons	1178	1227	1300
Lifesaving Lessons	8	6	20
Pool Clubs (JLC, Pool Kids, Synchro)	18	66	75
Leisure/Family Adm	28997	25081	25200
Lane Swim Adm.	3830	2947	3000
Fitness Class Adm.	2057	1162	1200

The above 1998 projected numbers have been based on the fact that the Kinsmen Aquatic Center will be opened one month earlier than in 1997.

Other things that may or may not affect the numbers in 1998 are as follows:

Red Cross Lessons

offer daytime lesson sessions during the spring and fall for preschoolers

offer family lessons where all children are able to have a lesson within one hour

offer a crash lesson session in June prior to the end of school

Lifesaving Lessons

offer lessons and/or programs on weekends or evenings

expend on the program variety offered

Lane Swim

set up a monthly challenge between Lacombe businesses (Employee fitness program) Businesses compete with other businesses as to who is in better shape

Fitness Classes

provide a fitness pass option which would allow participants to attend as many fitness classes throughout the season as they would like

V. MARKETING STRATEGIES

A Public Awareness

The Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Center is presently using the following ways to advertise and make the public aware of its facility and programs.

1. Lacombe Globe
 - a) Weekly Community Events ad sponsored by
 - b) Our Town Ad
 - c) Monthly two page spread
2. Brochures
 - a) Pool brochure
 - b) Individual program brochure
 - c) Don't Hibernate brochure

These brochures are all located at the pool.
3. Community Sign
Event date, times and place are displayed as they come up.
4. Newsletter
 - a) Town: Every two months a write up is located with Lacombe residents water bills.
 - b) School: A write up is included in the school newsletter informing the public of various programs.
5. Posters

Posters are made up as events come up and distributed at random around Lacombe to businesses.

It has been an observation that the advertising methods used lack some effectiveness due to the following reasons:

- Information overload

- Lack of availability
- Not getting people=s attention
- No direct targeting
- Only written material being used (seen and forgotten)

My hope is to increase awareness through increasing effectiveness. The following considerations are being made to each method to make this a reality.

1. Lacombe Globe

The community events weekly ad will highlight a maximum of four events or programs per week. Information contained will be limited to date, time, program, cost. Explanations will be omitted and those who are interested can request this information by calling the Aquatic Center.

The Our Town Ad will be limited to new or special event happenings. (clinics, courses) The ad is a paid advertisement therefore the layout and information must catch the readers attention. (include a graphic)

The two page spread is a very expensive once a month method. As a reader you are overwhelmed by all the information contained in two pages. This method could either be omitted completely, using the expense through more repetition advertising (radio/ television), or only contain limited information.

2. Brochures

The pool brochure and Don=t Hibernate brochures contain the same information, different format, and are available at the same locations. (pool, Town Office) Various individual program brochures are located at the pool and specify information relating to the program present. For future it would benefit the facility by continuing with the pool and program brochures, eliminating the Don=t Hibernate. The expense of the Don=t Hibernate brochure could again be allocated to radio or television advertising. The brochure distribution could be increased by having the pool brochure available at the pool, offices where people have to wait (doctors), and sending to surrounding communities. The program brochures could be available at the facility and put in target areas. (arthritis at senior complexes, preschool at day care)

3. Newsletter

Each newsletter will be continued although the information must be targeted to different audiences.

- a) The Town newsletter will contain programs for seniors and adults.
- b) The school newsletter will contain age appropriate programs.

4. Posters

The two most important qualities of any poster is location and uniqueness. Due to the low cost of posters many organizations use this method of

advertising. For our posters to be unique we will always use 11x17 inch paper and have the town=s logo on the top. The location of distribution will be determined by the target group. (water sports for teens at subway, arcade)

Along with improving our present advertising methods we will be adding variety and expanding our methods to radio, television, repetition and direct the following ways:

1) Radio

Set up an agreement with the radio stations that would entitle the Aquatic Center to a number of free weekly advertising broadcasts and in turn we will play their radio station at a designated swim(s) throughout the week, which would be advertised as that stations swim. (Z99 Monday Night Swim, CKGY Early Bird Swim)

CKGY and the Recreation Department have an agreement regarding the arena board advertising. CKGY has an advertising board displayed in the arena for a year and in turn the recreation department gets ten thirty second commercials broadcasted a year.

2) Community Channel

Shaw and Videotron cable have community channels (RDTV, ITV, CFRN) where weekly, monthly or yearly programs and events can be displayed.

3) Public Speaking Tours

Set up safety education presentations on boating and ice safety, first aid and pool behaviour. Throughout the operation season have staff present this information at school assemblies or to individual classrooms. Not only does this increase the awareness of the Aquatic Center, it increases the staff=s image and educates the public.

4) Displays/ Demonstrations

Throughout the year staff will demonstrate first aid skills within the town.(malls, mass registration) Displays would accompany the staff promoting programs and events at the Aquatic Center.

5) Flyers

This is written advertising although the advertising will find the people rather than the opposite. One or two days prior to a major event or a new program, flyers will be distributed around town. For those individuals who did not find or ignored other advertisements, this may be first time awareness.

6) Internet

Maintain up to date information on schedules, programs, and information on the Town of Lacombe Internet Web Site.

B) New Programs

The Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Center offers many programs as seen on page three. The following programs are being considered to increase the program availability:

- National Lifeguard Service
- Aquatic Emergency Care
- Senior Swim
- Aqua Leaders
- Water Volleyball

In 1998 the focus of the Aquatic Center will be to increase participation of programs and to increase the revenue through usage.

1. Participation

The goal of the Aquatic Center is to increase participation of programs by bringing in new faces through programming such as:

- a) Two for One Swim
- b) Free Trial Classes
- c) Bring a Grandparent, Friend etc.
- d) Loonie Swim
- e) Free Swim

These types of swims will need to be subsidized by the Aquatic Center initially. The long term, unguaranteed return is hoped be continuous participation of individual(s).

Continuous participation will only be returned if the participants have a positive experience during their visit. This can be accomplished by:

- a) Facility Cleanliness
- b) Water Quality (temperature, clarity)
- c) Knowledgeable Staff
- d) Positive Customer Service

2. Revenue

The following strategies are being considered to increase the revenues of the Aquatic Center.

a) Sponsorship

Contact various Lacombe businesses offering free advertising at the Aquatic Center for a sum of money. (Sponsor list located on wall, individual banners or signs on the pool walls)

Offer businesses free advertising for a monetary sum which would be used by the Aquatic Center to have a free swim

sponsored by that business(es).

Have businesses donate a service or item for a swim, receiving advertising through the swim. (Ex. Coffee available at morning swims donated by Dutchie=s Restaurant)

b) Community Group Rates

Contact all community groups prior to the start of the season offering them the opportunity to book the pool for parties. Have a set package available that would include rental fee for the pool, guards, upper pool lobby. There could be a discount price available for early bookings. If a sponsor could be found, this could include a lunch.

c) Birthday Parties

Contract out the catering of birthday parties to a business or individual. The business or individual would be responsible for supplying the cake, hotdogs, juice and decorations. The Aquatic Center would provide the pool, guard(s) and room for party.

The cost would include that of the caterer and Aquatic Center costs.

At the beginning of the 1997 season this was being done by Lori Autet as an extra service of the concession. This proved to be a successful service. There were twenty one catered parties until July 30 TH of the thirty six group/ party total bookings.

d) School Swimming Rentals

1) Surrounding Communities

Contact all the surrounding community schools prior to the start of the season. Offer them a lesson or leisure swim rental package available for their use.

2) Lacombe Schools

A review of the Joint Use Agreement with respect to use of the aquatic center should be undertaken during 1998.

C. Targets
YEAR

AREAS	1998	1999	2000
Radio Station Sponsors	1	2	4
Public Speaking Tours	set up	2	4

Displays/ Demonstrations	3	3	4
NLS Courses	1	2	3
AEC Courses	1	2	3
Senior Swims per week	1	2	3
Aqua Leader Courses	1	2	2
Water Volleyball Tournaments	1	2	2
Business Sponsors	2	3	5
School Swim Rentals	4	6	8
Community Group Bookings	4	6	8
Theme Swims	2	4	5
Special Events	3	4	5

D. Improvement Time Lines

November, 1997

- set spring, summer, and fall tentative schedules; one senior swim per week, one leisure swim for a water sport
- purchase pressure washer
- contact Pepsi regarding umbrellas
- acidize deck

December, 1997

- set Lifesaving program course schedule for '98
- structure Pool Kids program
- research cost, type and placement of shallow end slide
- set '98 pay scale
- move Aquatic Supervisor to front office
- review operating cost from '97 and adjust >98 cost accordingly
 1. Dolphin club rental
 2. Public rental
 3. School rental
- revise community/ school agreement

January, 1998

- Registration January 15, 1998
- Equipment rearranged for public access (shoe racks, pool equipment)
- policy and procedure manual updated (job descriptions, staff and patron discipline policies)
- develop a water treatment and mechanical equipment schedule (input from Calvin)
- set up packages for sponsors to buy (advertising or swims)
- set up community and school rental packages
- hire a full time Head Guard

February, 1998

- set special events schedule
- develop the Pool Kids instructor program outline and report card
- set in service schedule for >98
- update maintenance/ janitorial journal sheets (input from Calvin)
- develop pool rule brochure

- set janitorial tasks standards
- hire staff
- purchase plants
- contact volunteer society for volunteers

March, 1998

- open March 1, 1998
- set up theme swims to accompany leisure swims

April, 1998

- begin training process for a NLS/ AEC instructor from the staff

E. Pricing and Budget

1. Establish a yearly fitness season pass.
 - a pass may encourage participation through commitment
 - regular participants will receive a savings
1. Establish a yearly fitness season pass.
2. Lesson refund/ cancellation policy revised.

Present: For aquatic program refund, contact the Pool Office before the second class. Otherwise, refunds are not permitted, except with a medical certificated or at the discretion of Recreation Services.

A \$5.00 administration fee will be charge on all refunds. As well, refunds will be pro-rated on the number of classes that have already been held. Full refunds are given if the program is cancelled due to insufficient registration or program changes.

In cases of low registration, some classes may need to be combined.

The below change will allow time for instructor scheduling, class combining and cancellations due to low registration.

Change: The Lacombe Kinsmen Aquatic Center must be notified five days prior to the start of the lesson session &/ program for a refund. Exception: medical reason (certificate submitted) A \$5.00 administration fee will be charged on all refunds.

Full refunds will be given if canceled due to low registration or program changes.

Low registration may warrant combining classes.

3. Dolphin Club rental fees adjusted in comparison to the 1997 actual

operating cost.

- include an equipment usage fee
4. Red Cross swimming lessons and Lifesaving Courses will run based on the break-even point of the instructor and material cost.
 5. Leisure, Family, Lane, and Fitness programs are drop in programs offered for the users convenience. There is no way to determine the numbers prior to the program therefore staff cost and operating expenses are incurred with no guarantee of cost recovery.
 6. Special programs and events will be run on a break even expense budget.
 7. Public Rentals: Non-prime time - \$40.00/ hour OR \$25.00/ 2 hour
Prime time - \$60.00/ hour OR \$35.00/ 2 hour
Dolphin Club Rental: \$36.00/ hour

The above rates are based on the outdoor pool operating cost and include the wage of one lifeguard. These rates need to be reviewed based on the operating cost for 1997 and adjusted accordingly.

Mayor

DATE: January 12, 1998

Chief Administrative Officer

RES: 98-010