



BRAND PLATFORM & APPLICATION

November 2021

EDAC 2021 AWARDS ABSTRACT

CATEGORY: BRAND IDENTITY/APPLICATION

Purpose /Objective

As one of Alberta's smallest and oldest cities, Wetaskiwin has struggled to raise its profile and attract residents, businesses, and visitors. It has also been challenged by a lackluster reputation, negative news coverage and general pessimism.

During a 50-Year Community Vision and Values process in 2020, where over 10% of the population participated, the people of Wetaskiwin articulated their aspirational vision for the future as a vibrant, sustainable, and self-sufficient small city. The community's desire for meaningful change underscored the need for a resonant new brand expression and communication strategy, and they revealed that the original brand and logo no longer represented their city.

Our objective was to better position Wetaskiwin to visitors, prospective new residents, and businesses, while creating a brand foundation that engages locals in celebrating and promoting the city.

Effectiveness/ Meeting Objectives

The Communications and Economic Development Departments worked closely with McKim Communications to develop a communications strategy and brand foundation that focuses on our intrinsic values and welcoming character. "*Wetaskiwin, The City We Share*" expresses the meaning behind our name, which comes from Cree expressions, "*Learning to live on the land together,*" or, "*When you welcome your neighbour every day, that is Wetaskiwin.*"

The new logo's graphic is a stylized W-A for Wetaskiwin, Alberta. The infinity loop highlights the connectivity of our community, which was revealed during the visioning development process. The loop honours the connection to our history and heritage, commitment to working together for a better future, and the deep connection to our land, agricultural heritage and Indigenous origins. The tagline is both an invitation to the audiences we seek to attract, and a rallying cry for our community to continue to make Wetaskiwin the welcoming place that it is.

Challenges/Changes Made

Due to the pandemic, we could not launch the new brand in-person, so we had key stakeholders, brand ambassadors, media and the public join us with a virtual launch.

Anticipating some resistance from residents in retiring the city's existing logo – an iconic water tower – we ensured there was a strong case for change throughout our presentation and emphasized the depth of the community's input. We noted that numerous communities in Alberta and across Canada also have water towers as visual identifiers and as such, Wetaskiwin's water tower failed to differentiate our city and give our audiences reasons to believe. We asked stakeholders to participate in the event, presented rationales, samples of the brand in various applications and had robust messaging.

Media coverage was favourable, with the online stories becoming the most read that day. Our social media channels became a popular place for community members to champion and discuss the new brand.

Our digital marketing efforts were also positive. In just three months, impressions for our campaign exceeded the entire six-month projection by 123%.

Target Audiences

The primary target audiences include Albertan day-trippers and weekend explorers from communities within a 3-hour drive of Wetaskiwin, prospective new residents from larger urban centres and prospective businesses within our five target sectors for business development.