FOCUS GROUP NOTES

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IACIR Members: Martha Wehr

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For what types of services does your community use interlocal agreements?

- Solid waste
- Emergency management/civil defense/homeland security
- Dispatch towers
- Emergency medical services (EMS)
- Central emergency dispatch and records
- Road building (extensions, intersections, etc.)
- Drains
- Cooperative purchasing
- Animal control
- Information technology (IT) services
- Bridges
- Weights and measures
- Riverboat revenue sharing
- Local Economic Development Income Tax sharing
- Shared departments and staff
- Shared facilities (built to meet multiple needs)
- Federal homeland security grants require interlocal agreements
- Regional economic development
- Collaborative Partners
  - Local governments
  - Universities
  - Non-profits such as Humane Society
  - Private sector
Are there additional services for which this tool was considered that did not result in interlocal agreements?

- Central dispatch (turf issues)
- Purchasing
- Employee health insurance (didn’t provide lower cost for one party)
- Regional economic effort folded after a while; county with industrial park ended up with economic group

What was the impetus for creating the agreements that your community has entered into?

What have been the primary benefits?

- Insufficient resources without collaboration
- Pooling resources
- Efficiency
- Better communication
- Easier than complete consolidation
- Funding limitations (one partner can provide capital; the other can provide staffing)
- Provide better service
- Allowed a project to proceed sooner

In cases when a local government has no agreements, an agreement was sought but not achieved, or an agreement was difficult to achieve, what were the impediments?

- Turf
- Ownership of asset
- Fear loss of community identity
- Perception of double taxation
- Policy preferences: may agree on broad concept, but cannot work out the policy details
- Union contracts
- Need for approval from the fiscal body
- Opposition from elected officials, department leadership, or staff
- Lack of understanding, comfort with tool
- Resistance to change
- Lack of trust
- Not able to sustain a service beyond the initial effort
- Low statutory cap on telephone rate for emergency dispatch
- Cooperative purchasing requires advertisement in each participating locality (SBOA rules)
- HB 1362 doesn’t allow the combined entity to keep the collective levy at creation

What activities might increase the use of interlocal agreements?

- Saving money
- Successful projects
- Tie selected available resources to cooperative efforts
- Education, education, education
- Limited fiscal resources may prompt more agreements
- Create separate local boards to oversee interlocal agreements (remove politics)
- Savings cap on rates if shared resources
- Helpline (technical assistance)
- Email communication to listservs
- Online repository of all interlocal agreements to allow communities to copy and refine
- AIC Diploma session planned for early 2005
- Ability to set a uniform levy across participating units

What types of incentives would be meaningful in encouraging the use of interlocal agreements?
- Access to extra dollars
- Allow to keep savings