

Making Conserv



Students at Aileen Wright English Catholic School in Cochrane show off the message they learned from Northern Ontario Wires' conservation education program that took place during Education Week (photo courtesy of Northern Ontario Wires Inc.).



Education Plays Important Part in Northern Ontario Wires' Successful CDM Programming

When the call first went out from Minister Duncan that the government was looking to Ontario's electricity distributors to assist in championing the creation of a culture of conservation, the relatively small staff at Northern Ontario Wires (NOW) Inc. took up the challenge to ensure that their customers in the communities of Cochrane, Iroquois Falls, and Kapuskasing, were provided with the tools and knowledge they would need to play their part in achieving this province-wide goal.

As is customary with communities in Northern Ontario, the Wires Co. was provided viable input for its Conservation and Demand Management (CDM) Plan from its neighbouring utilities in the province's northeast, including: Chapleau Public Utilities Corp., Espanola Regional Hydro Distribution Corp., Greater Sudbury Hydro Inc., Hearst Power Distribution Co. Ltd., North Bay Hydro Distribution Ltd., and PUC Distribution Inc. in Sault Ste. Marie.

Education Holds Key to Conserving

Education was identified early as a central and critical component of how NOW approached their CDM strategy and the subsequent development of programs.

For NOW's customers, having access to information and educating consumers on the benefits of conservation was a paramount consideration. One approach was to advertise about the importance and need for conservation. In addition, local media coverage was an important medium to get the 'need for conservation' message out into the communities. Participation in the Conservation Bureau's "Every Kilowatt Counts" campaign further addressed the importance of energy conservation and provided consumer incentives through the distribution of coupons to purchase energy efficiency products.

NOW also worked with the community's local libraries and offered an Energy Reader program, as well as providing energy saving kits to those participants.

NOW also recognized the importance of educating school age children - the future consumers of energy - in conservation and energy efficiency. Northern Ontario Wire's Roxanne Genier and lineman Dan Boucher headed a program where elementary schools in their three communities learned about the importance of saving energy through a series of bilingual sessions. The presentations also included a safety montage in cooperation with EU&SA. The 5th and 6th

grades were targeted as electricity is already a component of that grade level's curriculum. The special sessions were also timed to take place during Education Week.

"I'm very proud of the way staff embraced the educational portion by bringing valuable information to an important segment of our customer base," said Northern Ontario Wire's CEO, Doug Theobald.

Looking Within for Energy Efficiency Savings

For the staff of NOW, an internal program was implemented that drew attention to the importance of turning off equipment when it wasn't in use and got employees thinking outside the box when it came to other energy saving techniques that could be employed in the workplace. The company also realized that shortfalls within its own infrastructure, such as line losses, needed to be identified.

Setting an example and promoting energy efficiency and conservation from within was important if they were going to ask the same of their customers. "As an organization, we support the CDM initiative and want to ensure that we play our part as an LDC, ensuring our infrastructure does not place the burden of responsibility entirely on our customers," explains Doug Theobald.

To this end, EnerSpectrum Group was brought in to conduct a System Optimization Pilot Study. The final report helped to identify two

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opportunities that would provide savings for the utility:

- The conversion of a load feeder to a 25 kV system resulted in a power loss saving during the peak period of 29 kW in winter and 21 kW in the summer; and,
- In the spring of 2007, re-establishing a feeder at 4.16 kV will provide power loss savings during peak times of 28 kW in the

winter and 32 kW through the summer season.

Although both projects have required a capital investment of \$36,000, it is expected that savings to the utility will be in excess of \$150,000 over a 25-year period. With such positive results, Northern Ontario Wires will move to Phase II in 2007 and perform pilot studies in Kapuskasing and Iroquois Falls.

Northern Ontario Wires Inc. is a small LDC in Northern Ontario, with its head office located in Cochrane. NOW serves the three communities of Cochrane, Iroquois Falls and Kapuskasing. In all, NOW Inc. services 6,200 customers in these communities along the Highway 11 corridor.

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