

Veridian Turns to Local Families to Help Promote Summer Sweepstakes



Veridian Connections has put a unique spin on marketing the *Every Kilowatt Counts Summer Sweepstakes* program to their residential customers. The utility has identified four families who wanted to reduce their power use and profiled each household's conservation plans in order to reach a 10 percent reduction in energy use this summer.

The Summer Sweepstakes program, offered in cooperation with the Ontario Power Authority, challenges customers to cut their electricity use by 10 percent between July 1st and August 31st. Registered participants who reach this goal are automatically entered into a draw to win energy efficient prizes, which range from major appliances, like an energy efficient refrigerator or washer/dryer, to mountain bikes and iPods with solar chargers.

By profiling the conservation efforts of ordinary households in Gravenhurst, Belleville, Pickering and Clarington, everyday consumers who wanted to make a difference and cut back on their energy use became the spokespeople for the program and local champions of conservation. The campaign draws from the

grassroots of the community and gives a face to individuals who are making a difference in their neighbourhoods, one family at a time.

Belleville's Lafferty family planned to find energy savings by installing a clothesline and using programmable power bars for their electronic equipment. "We look forward to lowering our energy costs, and helping to reduce the demand for electricity in the province," said Tom Lafferty. "We're confident that we'll achieve our 10% savings target, and challenge all our friends and neighbours to take part as well."

In Gravenhurst, the Lougheads planned to install a new energy efficient geothermal heating and cooling system and use the barbecue and microwave for cooking their summer meals. "We plan to make it a family challenge by encouraging our children to do their part - kids love prizes," said Mr. Loughead.

The four media events that profiled individual families signing up for the Summer Sweepstakes aligned with the release of a direct mail promotion entitled 'Show Your

Mother How Much You Love Her and show your love all summer long by embracing a greener lifestyle.' The three-panel mailer promoted the *Great Refrigerator Roundup* and *peaksaver@* programs, as well as the Summer Sweepstakes.

Veridian's approach was intended to 'touch' customers repeatedly over the course of a few weeks through the use of the direct mailer, earned media through their four events, and some paid advertising in local papers. The campaign garnered six articles in local newspapers and received coverage by CKWS Television. 811 households have signed up for the 2008 Summer Sweepstakes.

Veridian has continued to work with local media to present human interest stories of customers who successfully reduced their energy use to achieve the 10% savings goal during last year's summer conservation promotion, and to show how they have been saving since then. In mid-July, retirees Don and Rhonda Pritchard spoke about their efforts in 2007 to achieve a 10% reduction in power use. In fact, as a result of their conservation measures, the couple successfully reduced their consumption by a whopping 17.5%. ■

Veridian Connections distributes electricity in the Cities of Belleville and Pickering, the Towns of Ajax, Gravenhurst, Port Hope and Uxbridge, and the communities of Bowmanville, Newcastle, Orono, Beaverton, Cannington, Sunderland and Port Perry.