

Smart Meters + Smart Programs

How Enersource Hydro Mississauga is leading innovation in conservation with smart meter pilot program

Picture a lovely neighbourhood subdivision in your local community and visions that come to mind include mature trees and children playing outdoors. But in the heart of Mississauga, Ontario, an enclave of 550 homes has taken on a new identity: it is the hub of innovation in residential energy conservation centered on the smart meter brought to life in homes just like the one right next door.

Smart Avenues, the official brand of the one-year smart meter pilot program, was launched this year by Enersource Hydro Mississauga as a way to evaluate a homeowner's behaviour with respect to energy consumption once a smart meter has been installed. A highly customer focused program, the team at Enersource carefully set out a plan to not simply install a smart meter and assume a wait-and-see approach.

"The goal we set out as we launched this pilot was to deliver to these residents the tools and information that they will eventually need to take advantage of these smart meters," says Gunars Ceksters, President and Chief Executive Officer of Enersource Corporation. "The response from residents has been absolutely positive because we continue to reach out and listen to them. They are really enjoying being the 'test case' for the Province while saving money and energy at the same time."

Coupling smart meters and innovative conservation programs

Marrying conservation programs with the smart meter is the strategy Enersource assumed from the initial planning stages of

the pilot. Among the more progressive initiatives rolling out in Smart Avenues is Power Down On Peak; a complete home power shutdown during critical peak hours of demand in exchange for significant incentives on the hydro bill. To assess laundry and dishwashing use, a study aptly named "Laundry Quandary" is set to examine behaviour change associated with high energy loads and shifting these cycles to off peak periods. Yet key to the mosaic of conservation initiatives for change is the introduction of Time of Use pricing (TOU) to the Smart Avenues community. Enersource is assuming a trial approach to the new plan and will voluntarily recruit 100 residents who wish to explore how the TOU pricing plan will affect their hydro bill.

Other programs offered to residents of Smart Avenues include home energy evaluations and the joint-utility peakSAVER program which includes the installation of a free programmable thermostat in exchange for the ability to manage electricity loads for a few hours on the highest demand days of the year.

Customer communication is king

To inform and educate the Smart Avenues residents about the cutting edge conservation programs available to them as part of the pilot, Enersource continues to execute a highly targeted communications plan, including open house sessions in local community centers and quarterly direct mail campaigns introducing new programs to the project.

Central to this effort however is the production and recent launch of the Smart

Avenues video presentation. This collection of 15 vignettes focusing on everyday electricity conservation topics such as lighting and hidden power loads serves as a key tool to help Smart Avenues residents learn what they can do to take full advantage of their smart meter. Says Ceksters: "We think we've hit the mark with the complete series of topics and a range of real actions homeowners can take to capitalize on the smart meter."

Hosted by local news and radio host Anwar Knight, the stars of the film are a cast of actual Smart Avenues residents who volunteered to act as "conservation champions" for the production. Their own homes played host to video crews and energy specialists from companies such as OSRAM Sylvania to Elster Metering and helped support the grassroots approach to the communications with customers.

Over the summer, each Smart Avenues resident will receive a copy of the video and follow up surveys will be conducted to determine how behaviour may shift after viewing the measures that can be implemented to save energy dollars on the hydro bill. Enersource has distributed the film to fellow utilities and industry stakeholders to assess the potential for a wide scale adoption of the video across the Province in anticipation of the installation of smart meters throughout Ontario.

The technology behind the scenes

Although the focus of Enersource's pilot program is concentrated on evaluating behaviour change with the introduction of conservation programs and the smart

Smart Residents

Smart Avenues



Smart Avenues residents attend community open house to learn best practices in taking advantage of their newly installed smart meter (photo courtesy of Enersource Corp.)



Gunars Ceksters, President and CEO of Enersource Corporation stands beside Smart Avenues street signage, found on streets throughout the community (photo courtesy of Enersource Corp.)

meter, the pilot is only as good as the people, the programs AND the technology acting behind the scenes.

Since the Ontario government has established a target for the installation of 800,000 smart meters by December 31, 2007 and for all Ontario customers by December 31, 2010, the Smart Avenues pilot will measure the effectiveness and capabilities of the smart meter technology through the Energy Axis metering system developed by Elster Metering. The system provides two-way, meter-to-meter communication capabilities. For residents, this translates into the ability to view hourly and daily energy consumption over the

Internet via a password-protected web portal hosted on the Enersource main web site. For Enersource, it is the ideal opportunity to evaluate the nerve centre behind the program before widespread adoption throughout the City of Mississauga.

So remember that the next time you're strolling through your own community, one day, not far from today, that neighbour who always seems to have an answer for everything could just be the "smartest" guy on the "avenue", and a model champion of energy conservation for us all.

Enersource Corporation is a diversified energy and technologies company serving over 180,000 residents and focusing on quality of service with the distribution of electricity in the City of Mississauga, the promotion and delivery of conservation and smart metering solutions to meet government objectives, and increasing involvement in distributed generation to enhance provincial electricity supply. Enersource Corporation is 90% owned by the City of Mississauga, and 10% owned by BPC Energy Corporation (Borealis), a subsidiary of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System.