

Local Distributors Join Forces in Managing Design and Delivery of

In 2007, from the inception of mass market Ontario Power Authority programs, four Southwestern Ontario Local Distribution Companies came together to share the responsibilities of managing the design and delivery of five OPA programs. Since that time, Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro Inc., Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc., Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc. and Waterloo North Hydro Inc. have found success in working together on program delivery. They each serve both urban and rural settings with many customers living and working in each other's area. Finding a way to keep the message consistent across all four service territories was key to increasing the impact. Additionally, the financial benefit of splitting delivery and coordination costs allowed them to stretch their dollars further.



A Grand River Transit bus has been wrapped front-to-back with messages from The Great Refrigerator Roundup. You won't be able to miss the lassoing cowboys encouraging customers to sign up for their own free roundup. (Photo Courtesy of Waterloo North Hydro Inc.)

Serving a total customer base of 225,000 puts the four participating distributors on the map as one of the largest service areas in Ontario. It is also one of four regions identified in the OPA's Integrated Power System Plan as a constrained area. With one of the strongest and most

diverse economies in Canada, the potential for success in Conservation and Demand Management is impressive.

"Conservation programs in our territories are still in their infancy," says Rene Gatien, President of Waterloo North Hydro. "We still have a long road ahead to increase customer awareness. Until recently, CDM wasn't a forefront issue for our customers. Now, together, we are working hard to reverse this way of thinking. It takes time to change habits but we are confident we will reach our goals."

A 2007 study completed by the OPA, acknowledges that customers in the four LDC's service territories scored higher than the provincial average in the 'Green Champions' segment - meaning that their customers are willing to conserve electricity even if it involves some sacrifice, because it's the right thing to do. Building upon this keen



While working with the local school board, Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro created their Energy Champion, Switch. This highly sought-after 'local celebrity' makes appearances at a variety of events and schools reminding everyone how important it is to conserve energy. (Photo Courtesy of Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro Inc.)

conservation programs complements the vision of the Community Energy Plan" says Art Stokman, President of Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc.

sense of social responsibility, the group is working hard to strengthen the culture of conservation that already exists in their communities.

The City of Guelph is well recognized as a leader in green initiatives. With its innovative Community Energy Plan, detailing aggressive targets for energy reduction and environmentally responsible projects, the community is very receptive to local efforts. GHESI is working with its parent company and the City of Guelph to put the plan into action. "Working with our neighbouring LDCs to deliver

Province-wide CDM Programs

"We are excited about the portfolio of programs we are offering to aid our customers in their conservation efforts" says President and CEO of Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, Jerry Van Ooteghem. "From peaksaver and the Fridge Roundup to the Power Savings Blitz and ERIP, we feel we have something for everyone and we're working hard with our neighbours to increase awareness across the region."

Attending local home shows and community events has helped spread the word - and customers are responding!

Results to date for CDM programs have been agreeable. Although there have been challenges with delivery of the programs, 2009 is steadily ramping up. To date the four LDCs has rounded up an impressive number of old fridges and freezers through The Great Refrigerator Roundup. *peaksaver* is also gathering momentum in the community. Attending local home shows and community events has helped spread the word - and customers are responding!

The Electricity Retrofit Incentive Program continues to exceed expectations, as evidenced by the lack of marketing required. The word is out amongst local consultants and contractors. Customers are recognizing the corporate responsibility and financial impact on their bottom line by embracing energy efficient technological upgrades. Cutting edge custom projects are also emerging, demonstrating just how committed our local business community is to being the leaders of tomorrow.

"From small business to large manufacturing, corporations are not only making capital improvements but finding tools to empower employees with conservation habits. We are very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are committed to working with our customers," says John Grotheer, President and CEO of Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro Inc.

It's no surprise that this renowned Region has made a pledge to conservation. During Energy Conservation Week, 3,000 retractable clotheslines were handed out to customers who made a pledge to conserve energy. The thousands of signatures adorning three 4'x7'

boards are evidence of that. Customers were happy to share which of the 100 tips they currently practice, as well as discover other ideas they can embrace.

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"It's about creating awareness that will push conservation forward. Although the direct impact can't be measured, we will see it show up in the results as we continue to reach out to customers and equip them with the necessary tools for success," says Stokman. "As everyone starts to join in, we will see the culture change and our communities emerge as leaders in Ontario." ■



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