

# Reduce the Use!

the PUC Conservation Game

## Online Game Makes Energy Conservation Fun and Educational

In this era of heightened environmental awareness, innovative methods of educating youth about conservation have become increasingly important.

PUC Distribution's *Reduce the Use* is a web-based interactive game designed to help the electricity utility promote energy conservation in schools and increase awareness of the utility in its community.

PUC has a long and successful history of creating educational products such as cartoon characters, posters, and activity books to communicate with young people. Wanting to take their program to a new level, the utility partnered with Lucinda Studios, a state-of-the-art marketing communications company. This partnership led to the creation of the web-based game *Reduce the Use*. The contributions and expertise of both partners were combined to create a lively interactive energy conservation game.

Geared toward elementary school students, the game features two animated characters, Buzz (an all-powerful handyman controlled by the player) and Curly (a talking compact fluorescent bulb with attitude).

Players navigate through a typical home, identifying and then fixing some of the most common causes of wasted energy. The character's movement is controlled by using the cursor keys on a keyboard. Players use the

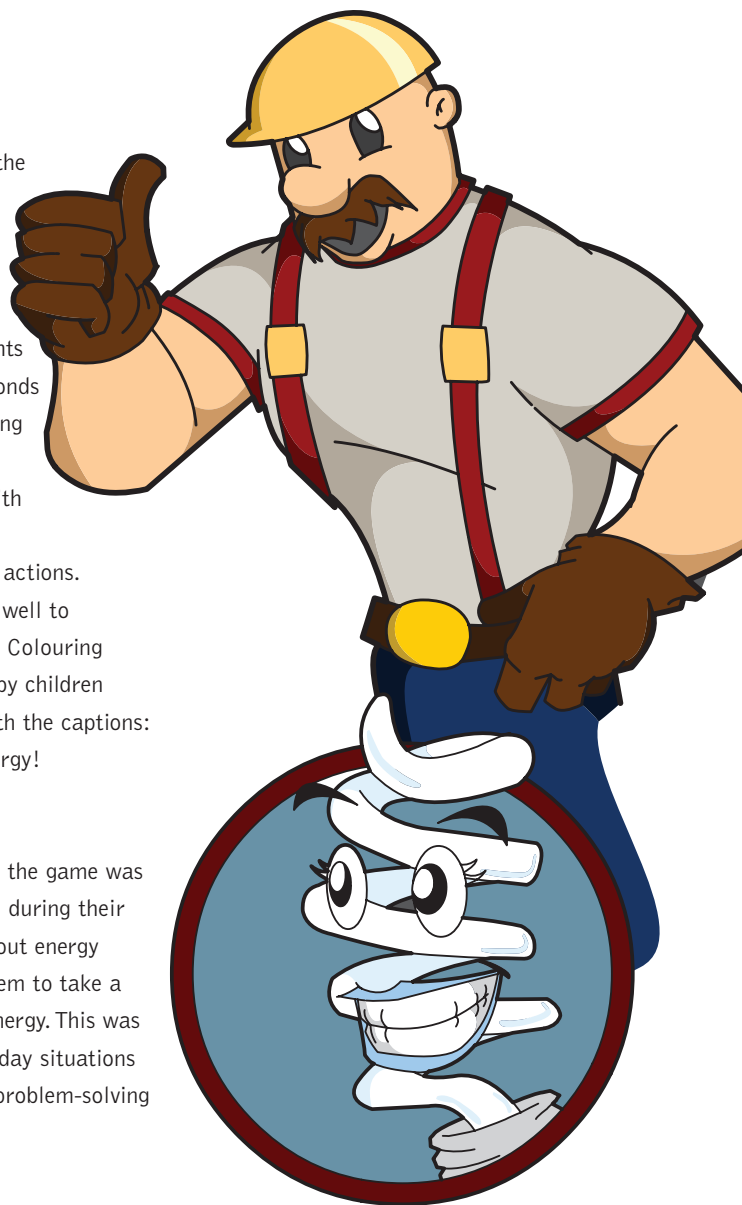
arrows to direct Buzz through the house as he looks for different situations that waste electricity - open doors, lights on when no one is in the room, and open windows. As Buzz turns out lights and closes windows, Curly responds by congratulating Buzz for saving energy and taking action on replacing incandescent bulbs with CFLs or installing new energy efficient windows, among other actions.

The game has the capability as well to conduct simple effective audits. Colouring pages can also be downloaded by children that feature Buzz and Curly with the captions: Play today! And save some energy!

PUC's primary goal in creating the game was to influence school age children during their formative years, teach them about energy conservation, and encourage them to take a proactive approach to saving energy. This was accomplished by creating everyday situations where children could use their problem-solving skills to identify energy waste.

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Based on a national survey conducted in 2002 by Environics International for Environmental Education Ontario, only 4% of Canadians believed they know enough to keep the



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# is Easier Than Ever for Hotel & Utility's Green Suites Program

has to offer. "It's a one-stop shop to get what you want out of the initiatives," Bain said of the Green Suites program.

Pre-audits are important because they help to prioritize what work should be done first, (low hanging fruit) ensuring the lodging facility is getting the best value for the work being done. Pre-audits offer customers further insight as to how their facilities currently use electricity - and this is quite a revelation for some owners and operators.

"Pre-audits are the real bonus because they're going to look at the whole building and building envelope and look at where the

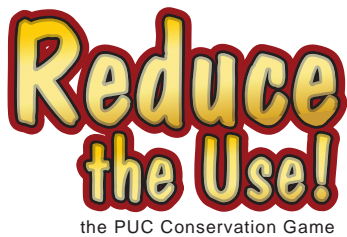
electricity is used in the facility," said Musyj. "Pre-audits can cost up to \$10,000 depending on the size of the facility, but we're offering it to a select few for free," he continued.

At ENWIN'S Energy Efficiency Expo on September 23rd, hospitality industry key staff learned about new energy efficient equipment. They will have the opportunity to speak with manufacturers and distributors to help them make the right decisions for their business.

Signing up and becoming involved with the program is easy. Applications are available on ENWIN's website. After the application forms

and supporting documents are completed and submitted, ENWIN will approve the application in about 10 working days. From there, the facilities can install their new equipment and submit invoices and paperwork detailing the changes within 30 days of installation. Hotel and motel owners will then receive their incentive cheque approximately 10 working days thereafter.

The application deadline for the program incentives is May 2010. All retrofits are to be completed by April 2011. For more information on the Green Suites program visit <http://www.ENWIN.com>. ■



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environment healthy.

This exemplifies a clear need for a teaching tool that addresses energy conservation and sustainability.

*Reduce the Use* fills an educational need, and because it is available online, the game can

be easily accessed by schools and played in the classroom or played by families at home.

The launch of *Reduce the Use* has allowed PUC to show the community, among other things, what their local utility is doing in terms of educating customers about conservation awareness. The game has proven to be a highly effective educational and public relations tool; but more importantly, it has been an excellent opportunity to execute a campaign that is both dynamic and highly visible and which offers tangible, measurable results.

*Reduce the Use* is a fun and modern way to communicate energy conservation to children and a great public relations opportunity for utility organizations. Utilities can purchase

*Reduce the Use*, which can be customized for their specific companies and communities. Because it is web-based, the game can be easily deployed.

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*Reduce the Use* can be accessed from the PUC website at: [www.reducetheuse.ca](http://www.reducetheuse.ca). For more information, contact PUC's Randy Johnson at [randy.johnson@ssmpuc.com](mailto:randy.johnson@ssmpuc.com). ■