

Wasaga Beach Business Community Plugs into Energy Efficiency Upgrades

In the two years that Wasaga Distribution Inc. has offered the *Power Savings Blitz* program, expectations for the program's uptake has been greatly exceeded. The popular commercial customer program has seen over two hundred Wasaga Beach business owners reaping the benefits of new energy efficiency retrofits and pocketing the energy savings. It's a win-win situation - good for the business' bottom line and good for the environment.

The province-wide *Power Savings Blitz*, offered in partnership with the Ontario Power Authority, provides qualifying businesses with electricity demand of less than 50kW a free assessment and up to \$1,000 in energy efficiency upgrades and labour at no cost to the customer. It allows small business to make inexpensive, but effective energy efficiency changes.

In 2008, Wasaga Distribution's target of having 76 businesses sign-up for the program was surpassed with 119 commercial customers enrolling in the program. So far in 2009, the utility has targeted 58 for enrolment and 87 have already signed on.

Efficient lighting retrofits remain the most popular among many of the local businesses. At one of the local motels, incandescent 60 Watt bulbs were replaced with 207 efficient 18 Watt Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs. The corner florist replaced inefficient lamps with 80% ballast factor lamps, CFLs and 3 Watt LED lighting. And one of the local apartment buildings replaced 54 standard incandescent bulbs with CFLs, as well as insulating water pipes that had never



previously been insulated.

The success of the program is being attributed to a number of key factors, including:

- A very successful direct mail campaign that generated customer interest at the outset;
- A motivated and experienced local contracting trade that was enlisted early in the process and provided with a thorough orientation of the program's merits;
- No one supplier or contractor 'owns' the program, rather it is a cooperative effort; and,
- Wasaga Beach has a close-knit commercial sector and a business association that actively promoted the program.

The buy-in from trade contractors has been integral to the program's success, working in cooperation with Wasaga Distribution and

EnerSpectrum

Group, who managed the planning and implementation of the program.

"The success of this program is almost entirely due to the wonderful effort from the contractors in our service territory," said Joanne Tackaberry, CGA, Manager, Finance and Administrative Services, Wasaga Distribution. "The contractors embraced this concept right from the beginning and were talking to customers before Wasaga even had flyers or other materials to give them." ■

Wasaga Distribution Inc. services the community of Wasaga Beach in the South Georgian Bay region.