

DISCUSSION

2008 Operation Save H₂O Program

In 2008, the program was focused on residences that used higher than average amounts of water. A team of 4 post-secondary and 4 high school students was employed from May through to mid-August to deliver information to approximately 2200 dwellings that were considered “high-consumption water users” based on their utility bills. The students were divided into four operational teams. Each team was assigned to a different community in Surrey and visited approximately 550 residences over the course of the summer.

The teams provided the homeowners with information on outdoor and indoor water conservation methods. The teams also provided the homeowners with tips and tools to assist in reducing water consumption. This combination of printed information and tools, as well as direct discussion between the teams and residents about site-specific issues, focused on demonstrating to residents how simple changes could result in significantly lower water consumption and, in turn, lower water and sewer charges.

The 2008 program resulted in significant decreases in water consumption in those homes that were visited in comparison to water consumption data for the same households in prior years. Comparisons in water consumption for the households involved in the program showed an average water consumption decrease of 14%.

This student-based initiative is important for the City as it encourages water conservation practices that are complementary to the goals of City’s Sustainability Charter and will result in cost savings to the residents and to the City. The residents’ direct cost savings are realized through a reduction in their utility bills while the City’s indirect cost savings are associated with the reduction in the cost of pumping water, and more significantly in the deferral of upgrades to the City’s network that would otherwise be necessary due to increasing water consumption by the City’s residents.

Proposed 2009 Operation Save H₂O Program

The 2009 Operation Save H₂O program will continue with the targeted education campaign for high water users as in 2008, and will also include more broadly based water conservation education for Surrey residents through various community events. It will also focus on promoting the voluntary metering program that is available to Surrey residents.

The program will be comprised of 5 teams with a total of 10 students. Four teams will be ambassadors to specific communities of Surrey and will visit homeowners within these areas. The fifth team will be a Citywide-based team that will prepare educational materials for use at community events throughout the City. They will also assist the other teams as time allows.

The costs of the program are documented in Table 1. Funding for the program is available from the approved 2009 Water Utility Budget.

Table 1

Operation Save H₂O Program	Costs
Program Management	\$ 45,000
Student Wages	\$ 99,000
Program Materials & Other Disbursements	\$ 39,000
TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$183,000

Consultant Assistance for the 2009 Operation Save H₂O Program

The Engineering Department will oversee the 2009 Operation Save H₂O program with the day-to-day management of students being provided by Dillon Consulting Ltd. (Dillon). Dillon managed the program in the 2008 and performed the work very successfully. Dillon Consulting Ltd. is in a unique position to provide the services for this program for 2009 based on their experience in 2008.

CONCLUSION

The primary benefit of the Operation Save H₂O program is to reduce overall water consumption by assisting high-water consumers in reducing their indoor and outdoor water consumption, which results in reduced costs to both the homeowner and the City. Important secondary spin-off benefits are the employment opportunities and experience provided for Surrey secondary and post-secondary students.

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