

Woodstove Exchange Program Pilot Evaluation

Retailers, Suppliers and Local Coordinators



FINAL REPORT

PREPARED FOR

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Definitions

Retailer – also referred to as a dealer, means a registered seller of qualifying appliances within the Woodstove Exchange Program boundaries.

Supplier – an agent for the manufacturers of appliances; these agents work directly with retailers on inventory orders and marketing.

Qualifying or eligible appliances include:

1. A “stove” is a free standing space heater with door(s) on it. Homemade and ‘barrel’ stoves count along with factory made.
2. A so called “airtight” fireplace insert, or tube type heat exchanger with a face plate and door (like the ‘Free Heat Machine’ or Welenco) that is currently installed in a fireplace.
3. A wood furnace in exchange for a pellet furnace, gas furnace, electric furnace or PSG Caddy wood burning furnace.
4. Factory built zero clearance fireplaces, only if they are being used as main heat source (pre-inspection trip can verify eligibility)
5. It does not have to be a wood for wood exchange. Gas, Pellet and Electric stoves/inserts may be used for the replacement. Additionally, non-conventional heat sources such as geothermal can also qualify.

(This definition is taken directly from the Retailer Guidelines for the Skeena-BVLD Pilot Program, dated December 5, 2006.)

Introduction

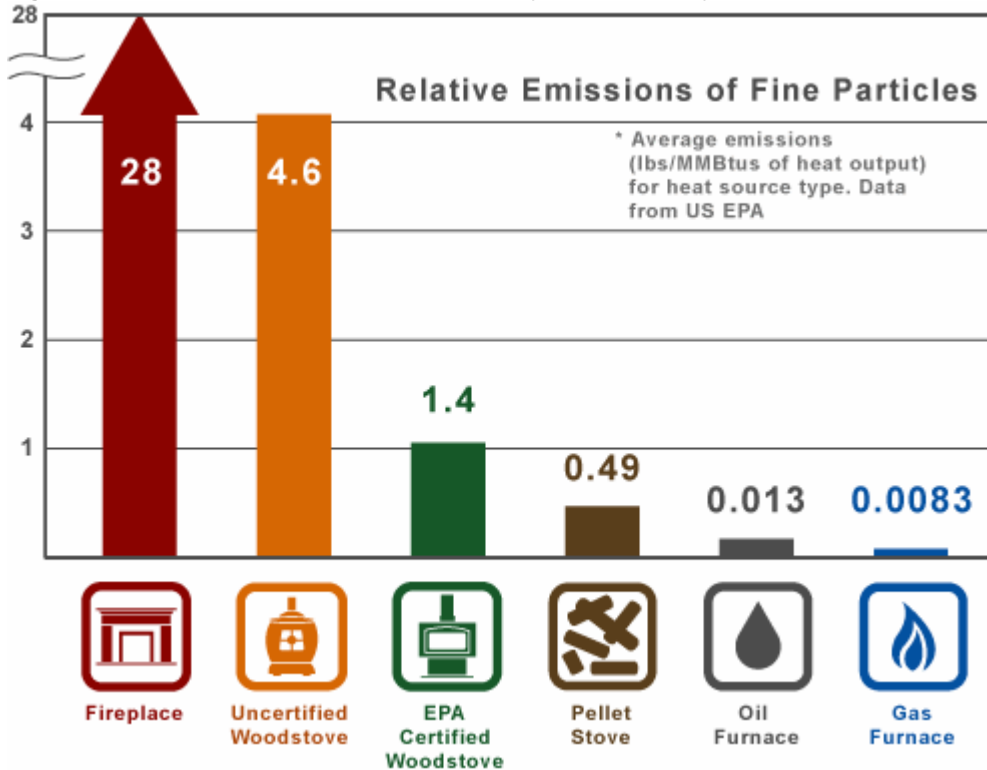
This is the fourth report in a series completed as part of the B.C. Ministry of Environment’s Woodstove Exchange pilot project in the Skeena/Bulkley Valley –Lakes District region. The project began in 2005 with industry consultations, continued through 2006 with a market analysis report of potential Exchange program participants, the market analysis fed into a report on how to apply Community –Based Social Marketing Techniques, which in turn led to the pilot implementation period from December 2006 to April 30, 2007.

For the purposes of evaluation and program improvement, this report focuses on the spring 2007 implementation period with some data included up to the end of September 2007. Evaluating this project is somewhat tricky given that the Skeena-BVLD program was launched as a three year project ending in 2010 and the implementation period is now continuous or at least will run until rebate funding is exhausted.

This report presents results of retailer and supplier surveys, as well as the coordinators’ evaluation. While most of the information presented originates from Skeena-BVLD sources, feedback from Cariboo retailers related to key program components is also included. A second report on consumer awareness and participant feedback has also been prepared by Environics Research Group and is referred to in this report.

Following an announcement of a \$1 Million fund for provincial woodstove exchange programs, a provincial steering committee is being launched November 15, 2007 to finalize details of how this money will be distributed to ensure the best results at the community airshed level. As shown in Figure 1 below, there are significant gains to be made by meeting the goal of changing out 50,000 inefficient woodburning appliances. It is hoped that this report will prove useful for the task that lies ahead.

Figure 1 – Relative Emissions of Fine Particles by Heat Source Type



Pilot Project Evaluation Methodology

The B.C. Ministry of Environment together with Footprint Environmental Strategies developed a terms of reference for the evaluation component of the pilot project. The main objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Identify existing tools that can inform the evaluation process.
- Evaluate the programs that ran in the Skeena and Cariboo regions and collect information to make the programs more successful in the future
- Develop common templates for cost, ease, and simplicity purposes

Four phases to the project were identified: scoping and methodology, data collection, report writing, and distribution. A project team - consisting of consultants (Footprint Environmental Strategies and the Frause Group), MOE staff from the Cariboo and Skeena regions and Victoria, and Zigi Gadowski of Hearth Products Association - was formed to provide feedback on survey objectives and questions, with Footprint taking the lead on development of surveys. Six primary data collection activities were completed as follows:

1. Community research on program awareness and advertising. This survey consisted of telephone interviews conducted with a representative sample of 103 residents (18 years and older) of the Skeena region and 101 residents of the Cariboo region (for a total sample of 204).

2. Exit assessment with program participants. This survey consisted of telephone interviews conducted with 104 participants of the woodstove exchange programs in Skeena and Cariboo regions.

3. Assessment with program non-participants. This survey consisted of telephone interviews conducted with six non-participants of the woodstove exchange programs in Skeena and Cariboo regions. These were identified as persons who had obtained a voucher or voucher number, but who did not use it to exchange their old wood-burning product.

4. Assessment with program retailers. This survey consisted of telephone interviews with registered woodstove exchange retailers in the Skeena-BVLD (total of 13) and Cariboo regions (total of 6). Skeena-BVLD retailers were interviewed by Footprint Environmental Strategies while Cariboo retailers were interviewed by the MOE Cariboo Region co-op student.

Skeena retailer interviews had an average duration of 35 minutes, with an additional 15 minutes required to reach the right person and to complete the questionnaire. Most retailers could not stay on the phone for more than 15 minutes without interruptions, and early morning calls were preferred. Surveys were attempted between August 27 and September 19, 2007.

5. Assessment with suppliers. This survey consisted of telephone interviews with wood-burning appliance suppliers working with registered woodstove exchange retailers in the Skeena-BVLD region. A list of 16 suppliers and manufacturers in Western B.C. was provided by Zigi Gadowski and based on the advice from retailers, the list was pared down to four significant contacts.

Supplier interviews had an average duration of 30 minutes, again with an additional 15 minutes required to reach the right person and to complete the questionnaire. As with the retailers, two or three attempts were necessary. Surveys were attempted between September 27 and October 5, 2007.

6. Assessment with Skeena-BVLD program coordinator. An evaluation template used for Burn-It-Smart project coordinators was modified and completed by the Skeena-BVLD program coordinator, with additional input provided by Laurie Gallant of Footprint Environmental Strategies who is also the facilitator for the BVLD Airshed Management Society.

Retailer Survey

Objectives

The primary objective of the survey was to determine the commitment of retailers to higher level program objectives and what they are willing to do to help us succeed. As a secondary objective, we were looking to determine the right amount of partners for future programs and the amount of control they have. The survey was pre-tested on one retailer to evaluate its design in terms of respondent comprehension, respondent fatigue, appropriateness of question wording, and length.

Given the small number of retailers involved with the survey, the analysis is of a qualitative nature. Emphasis is placed on responses by the 13 Skeena region retailers in this report with selected responses by the six Cariboo retailers included as appropriate.

Reasons for participating in program

Improving local air quality and generating off-season sales were the most popular reasons for participating in the program, followed closely by a company commitment to social and environmental responsibility. Improving safety in homes was also mentioned.

In addition to these standard reasons, retailers were also motivated by the program package of financial incentives and the opportunity to provide additional education to their customers. One retailer in the Skeena-BVLD program was under the impression that retailers were required by law to participate in the program and this was a motivating factor.

Wood burning appliance sales

The majority of retailers in both Cariboo and Skeena-BVLD classified the impact of the Exchange program on sales as somewhat positive or very positive. No negative impacts were reported although four retailers did report a neutral impact. Reasons provided for a positive or neutral impact included:

- No sales- but more people did come in.
- Sales really dependent on how work force is doing and Terrace is still recovering from the mill shutdown.
- Store was already experiencing a good season.
- Store received an award [from the BVLD Airshed Management Society] for exchanging the most stoves and did well in sales.
- Felt it was a good thing to get rid of some old stoves in the valley - for pollution sake. She really believes that education is the critical element needed, and fines if necessary, to encourage people to burn clean fires. Pointed to examples of bylaws in Whitehorse, where they have fines for smoking during inversions. Have to cover all the angles of this problem.

- It was good, but could have been a lot better. The program should have been more like it was in 2004. More advertising money should have gone into education. This year there were no workshops in Burns Lake and that was very disappointing. I could have given the workshop.
- It was a great program. I was skeptical at first, but my increased sales during the program proved it was worth it.
- Timing of year affects sales - late summer or early fall would be better.
- Really depends on home finances and how close it is to Christmas - end of August, September, beginning of October is when people are looking and want to be done with process before cold starts.

Factors affecting level of sales in long term

Retailers reported a host of reasons for an increase in sales over the past three years in general, with the high price of energy topping the list in both Skeena-BVLD and Cariboo. The location of pellet mills and abundance of pine beetle wood were also cited as factors in the Cariboo. Popularity of environmental issues also made the top five lists in both regions. Additional explanations for healthy sales include:

- Local economy improving.
- People are asking more questions, different questions, and more people in general are asking questions.
- Incentives help a lot (saving money).
- People want to burn less wood because it makes for less work for them.

Factors affecting sales in March and April

In the Skeena- BVLD region, four retailers felt that program marketing was the most important factor affecting sales during the peak Exchange period. Equal credit was given to the high price of energy, vouchers and discounts by three of 13 retailers. Direct marketing by retailers or suppliers was cited by one retailer in the Skeena- BVLD region. Significantly, most retailers chose to offer an open-ended response to this question. Keep in mind that these are compiled answers and included reasons for all levels of sales including no sales at all.

- Wasn't anything wrong or right, it just worked out like that. People definitely knew about it but chose not to buy.
- People were ready to change out anyway - stoves needed replacement for safety reasons.
- Higher awareness of consumers.
- Because we're selling the Blaze King, the most efficient on the market in this area.
- The sales I had during this time had nothing to do with the program. People were coming into my store to buy from me because I have a good reputation.

Length of in-store promotions

The program was originally planned and marketed for the month of March or four weeks. An unexpected four week extension of the in-store discounts to the end of April was announced during the last week of March by suppliers. When questioned, all of the retailers in the Cariboo and Skeena-BVLD programs

agreed they would support a discount period of eight weeks for future programs. Additional comments on the length of the program and motivation follow:

- I think it is for a good cause and works out well
- 6 weeks
- Eight weeks better than four
- More sales
- They are okay with however long we want to run it. Has a really good relationship with their supplier - Frank is great to deal with and will do whatever he can to help out.
- Environment, cleaner air
- Poor initial response during the month of March. The Town of Burns Lake only came on board with extra incentive for April.
- We were forced to by our competitors who signed on.
- Again, we thought we were required by law to do so.
- I didn't actually know that it was extended.

It is disconcerting that some retailers felt forced into the extension or were unaware of the extension. However, given that even the coordinators were caught off guard by the last minute announcement by major suppliers and retailers, it is not surprising that communications lagged behind the extension. In addition to the extension, it is also significant that the Village of Burns Lake came on board with a \$500 voucher at the beginning of April, coinciding with the adoption of their new smoke control bylaw.

Timing of in-store promotions

When retailers were asked if they would support changing the timing of the program from March/April to early fall, the response was mixed in both the Cariboo and Skeena-BVLD. In the Cariboo, most retailers (83%) were against an early fall focus whereas in the Skeena, only 33% were opposed.

Reasons for preferring March/April included wanting to increase sales during the slow season, being busy in the fall with new stock, and wanting to align with supplier wishes (Regency and MTL have promotions in September and prefer to keep campaigns separate). Reasons for preferring the fall included a desire to play to consumer behaviours (more money at the beginning of the fall season and beginning to think warm thoughts).

When prompted for an open-ended response to the “best one or two month period” question, the answers once again showed that Cariboo retailers prefer a spring campaign over a fall campaign while Skeena is just the opposite. Both groups of retailers emphasized that the timing is also strongly related to supplier wishes. Here is a sampling of responses:

- Mid Jan to mid March
- Feb, March
- April, May, Earth Day to clean air day (busy season)
- July, August

- March- April, April-May preferred
- The best time to run the program would be September and October.
- The ideal time to run the program would be October and November.
- I also think it would be good to have the program run all the time. (no time limit)

Qualifying appliances

All retailers in both the Cariboo and the Skeena-BVLD supported the pilot program definitions for eligible appliances, both old and new.

Additional comments were offered as to why support was given for expanding definition of old appliances as follows:

- As long as there is collection and recycling system.
- Fireplaces should be included as lots of houses have them and wouldn't it be better to have an insert installed.
- Cook stoves should also be exempt if they are EPA.
- Furnaces and outdoor wood burning boilers are worse for pollution than most of the woodstoves.
- Should include masonry fireplaces

As to why support was given for including any type of low emission, high efficiency appliance in the definition of eligible appliances, the following insights were provided:

- As a retailer, it doesn't affect me as I do not sell all of the listed products, but I support it on principle.
- Wood furnaces (EPA) and certified boilers should also be included.
- More consumer interest in heat pumps and geothermal energy.
- Not everyone wants to burn wood and there are other options out there.
- Gives people an alternative to wood and still clean up the air.

Outdoor Woodburning Boilers

Retailers were asked if they would support a local initiative to ban the sale of Residential Outdoor Woodburning Boilers (OWBs) that do not meet emission standards. No opposition was reported in the Cariboo and only one retailer in the BVLD was opposed to this idea (in the Burns Lake area). Retailers were much more comfortable having a ban in populated areas; support for a ban in rural areas would likely be mixed.

Only one retailer is selling OWBs in the BVLD region and he was supportive of a ban, remarking he thought this was already covered by the District of Houston bylaw. Social values emerged as being more important than potential environmental gains in other responses as follows:

- If the ban was announced but would not be enforced for 10 years or so, this would give people that chance to get out of the industry without losing their shirts.

- We don't sell these appliances so ban not applicable to them but support concept. Prefer to stay out of politics - let government make the rules.”
- I don't know. A full ban seems a little harsh--the people selling them are just trying to make a living.

Program marketing

A series of questions related to marketing were asked, with the first question establishing the retailer's level of familiarity with marketing materials. Only two retailers reported not seeing or hearing any ads in the Skeena-BVLD, both of them in Smithers. Also of interest, one of them worked at the store with the highest number of sales and the other worked at the store who thought participation in the program was mandatory.

All retailers were asked if they paid the co-op advertising fee of \$200 as part of the registration process. Of the 13 retailers, eight reported paying the fee, three of the respondents did not know, and one reported not paying the fee.

Most retailers reported a high satisfaction level with the amount and style of advertising during the original March Exchange period with three retailers reporting dissatisfaction or extreme dissatisfaction. An observation was made that people did not know that they could purchase a new stove and get the discount, but change out later.

The ratings for advertising satisfaction in April were lower, with six retailers reporting dissatisfaction or extreme dissatisfaction. Most comments related to retailers and customers not knowing about the extension. One retailer noted that he did most of the advertising about the extension on his own. Concerns were expressed that inadequate advertising cost some exchanges.

Eight of thirteen Skeena-BVLD retailers reported doing extra advertising to supplement program marketing, including radio talk shows and booths at trade shows. Ten indicated they would be willing to work more closely with program coordinators to share marketing expertise. Additional comments were offered as follows:

- Would come to a brainstorming meeting for program marketing if timing was right.
- Program marketing was really good - ads provided a prompt; “people know what they want anyway”.
- Rebates were really good.
- Sales are slow now - more ads needed over summer.
- More, heavier advertising on local level needed - these can be small ads.
- Recommend leaving in-store discount advertising up to retailers and program can just say "check for special pricing". All retailers have different markups and discounts - too confusing for general program marketing.
- Focus the advertising on education- it's a people problem more than a stove problem.
- Good idea to put up more doorknob hangers, so as not to confront neighbours.
- Giving courses and threatening with a fine if necessary, would be necessary elements.



- In 2004, we did a talk show on the radio where people could call in and have their questions answered. This was great, even better than the workshops. It could be longer, maybe an hour instead of 20 minutes.
- More newspaper and more radio.
- Put more focus on finding innovative local ways to market.
- The advertising was good overall. Bold and to the point. I liked the superhero/bad guy theme. I think a little more clarification was needed in the area of the new appliance--a lot of people thought they had to buy a new woodstove to qualify.
- Could use some more perks like “up north-extra money” for people to change out (Cariboo)
- More places (radio, billboards) (Cariboo)
- More posters and point of sales (Cariboo)



Voucher system

A paper voucher system was used in the Skeena-BVLD program with the original intention of obtaining commitment from residents to change out old appliances. The front of the voucher advertised where to get more information and highlighted the \$250 value, while the back outlined the steps required to receive the rebate and provided a space for the resident to record their contact information so that a cheque could be mailed to them.

Vouchers were initially distributed at community events and a small supply given to retailers and municipal partners offering rebates. Early in the program, it became obvious that the delay between a resident taking a voucher and cashing it in was creating a challenge for budgeting when and where the 400 available rebates would be used.

A series of questions were asked to test if the vouchers achieved their original purpose, to record how retailers adapted their systems in response to the challenge, and to evaluate future use of the vouchers. Most retailers reported that the vouchers were easy to use with two reporting they didn't know since no exchanges occurred. One retailer stated that she prefers the vouchers over other systems that have more paperwork. Two others reported developing internal tracking systems to deal with the challenge of not knowing if and when a voucher would be redeemed.

An even split was reported when asked who filled in the majority of the vouchers, the customer or the retailer. Retailers were also asked what percentage of vouchers used were given to the customers and filled in at the time of sale. All reported between 90 and 100% towards the end of the program blitz in April. One retailer felt the back of the voucher should be completed by the retailer, unless the person installed the stove themselves.

In the Cariboo, a paperless voucher system was used that required residents to phone a hotline to receive a voucher number. Retailers there reported that between 10 and 75% of residents called for a voucher number from the store at the time of purchase.

Suggestions for improving the voucher system focused on tracking rather than obtaining commitment and included:

- Only give vouchers out at time of sale
- Give out brochures instead of vouchers to advertise program
- List qualifying appliances and how to determine exactly what does not qualify
- Develop a tracking system of who has a voucher
- Retailers could be asked to handle BVLD and municipal vouchers (concern that municipal voucher administration was a burden on local fire chief)
- Heard comments from customers that they were really happy with speed of getting rebate back after sending in voucher.

Level of incentives

Table 1 summarizes incentives available through the Skeena-BVLD pilot program. Most retailers reported that the level of incentives outside of in-store discounts were adequate with only one in disagreement. This retailer felt the AMS voucher value could be higher, and added that the municipal (Houston) rebate was great.

Table 1 – Summary of Economic Incentives

Partner	Value	Number	Total Budget
BVLD Airshed Management Society (grant from MOE)	\$250	400	\$100,000
District of Houston (local residents only)	\$300	40/year	\$12,000
Village of Burns Lake (local residents only)	\$500	20	\$10,000
Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (electoral areas only)	\$50	20	\$1000
Free recycling of old appliances through entire region.	NA	NA	NA
Municipal inspection fees waived where applicable	NA	NA	NA
Favourable financing at local credit unions (Loans up to \$5000 with an interest rate of Prime plus 0%)	NA	NA	NA

Retailers who were satisfied with the level of incentives offered these additional comments:

- Incentives were good enough to spark purchase. People will take more if you give it. Most customers that came in were going to change out anyway.
- For some people it was, for others it wasn't. Why get rid of an old stove if it still works.
- Yes, and sometimes more so. For example, I have a stove in my store listed price \$664. It is not a quality stove and I have it to compare with the quality stoves I sell. But it's EPA and technically someone could walk in here with the voucher plus the extra incentive from Burns Lake and come away with money--people shouldn't make money off this program.

- More than enough. Why should retailers and manufactures have to subsidize? People need to get educated and make the right decision themselves. The government should not have to force people, but rather re-think and start targeting the public: price is important, but is not the bottom line; there are other issues (environmental) to consider.
- Yes, more than adequate.

Retailer inclusiveness

Most registered retailers in the Cariboo and Skeena-BVLD support inviting all retailers in the program area. Additional thoughts are recorded below:

- Supports keeping sales in region.
- Would prefer to invite retailers selling high quality stoves and offering high level of service (i.e. can also install).
- As long as overall success of program isn't hurt, why not?
- Invite all otherwise it is biased.
- Limit to Wood Energy Technicians of B.C. (mentioned twice)
- No Box Stores (mentioned twice)

Recycling of old stoves

Decommissioning and recycling of old appliances is a requirement to receive a government rebate on a replacement appliance or system. Retailers were asked if a system was in place to adequately ensure destruction and recycling of exchanged stoves. All retailers in the Cariboo responded positively while two in the Skeena-BVLD region thought the system was inadequate and two were unsure. By way of explanation, these retailer comments are provided:

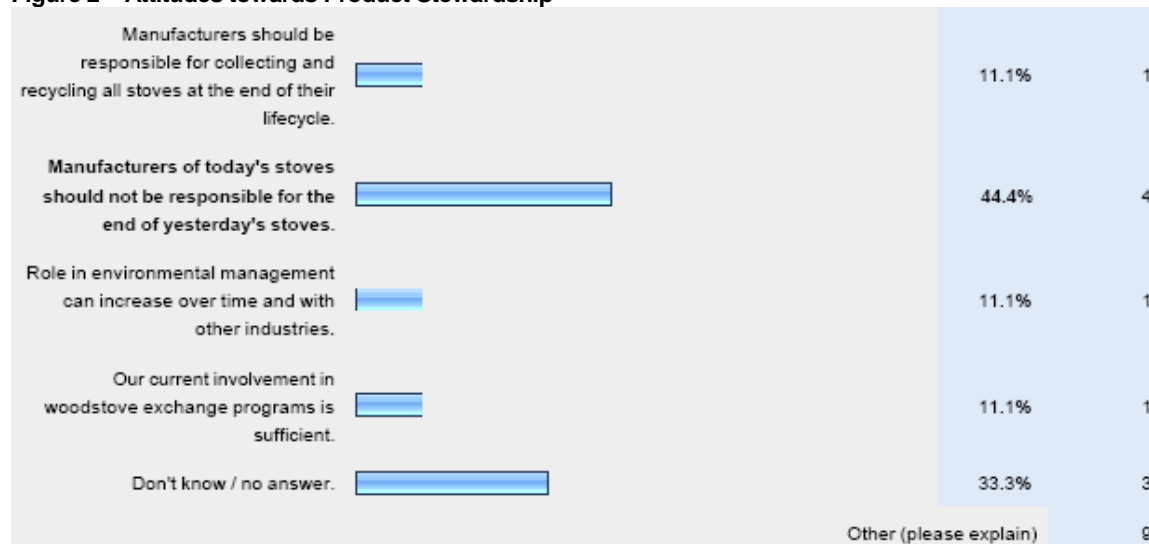
- This component was covered off by voucher and they weren't involved with it.
- They knew where the stoves had to go. Would be easier if the town just picked up the stoves. Does the Town have resources for this? Never heard how it was for customers who had to drop the stove off themselves.
- The system was not adequate as there was a cost incurred in moving the stove to either the customer or the business. Customers should have been able to bring the stove directly to the regional transfer station.
- It would be good to have one day a week where there was always someone at the works yard to better direct customers.

With the growing popularity of product stewardship and integrated environmental planning, a question was posed to test familiarity and attitudes towards these two issues in the context of the woodstove exchange program. This question was somewhat awkward for retailers, perhaps because it ventures into subjects outside of their usual scope of operations. The interviewer read out the statement below or offered a paraphrasing:

The role of both government and industry in environmental management of products is changing to consider the whole life cycle of products that are manufactured and/or marketed in B.C. Life cycle responsibility includes designing for low impact during the manufacturing stage as well as during consumer use and at the end of the product life. For example, beverage containers and some electronics are now under "industry stewardship programs". By participating in Woodstove Exchange Programs, your company is voluntarily moving in this direction. What do you think the future role of retailers and suppliers should be for changing out old stoves?

Responses recorded in Figure 2 and under "Other" comments show a range of attitudes and comprehension towards product stewardship, and illustrate that at least some retailers have a firm grasp on the relationship between environmental management and regulation and education.

Figure 2 – Attitudes towards Product Stewardship



Other comments:

- Homeowners need more education, don't understand ratings and certifications. Hear complaints about how regulations are different here than other provinces. Some people don't know how to use stoves.
- Anything industry and government can do to help change out old stoves even faster is a good thing.
- More education of customer i.e. using less wood with high efficiency stoves. This can be done through staff training.
- It's always good that people exchange their stoves for more efficient ones in general. Government could force the issue. Life cycle responsibility is difficult for industry because companies go out of business. Manufacturers should be looking at the environmental issues relating to their product. Should be the Town's responsibility for recycling old stoves, just as it is for paper, etc...
- We can recycle metal at the transfer stations, that's good enough. What we should be focusing on is a provincial law to get rid of all non-EPA (or other similar certification) stoves and all burning of forest waste by a certain date.
- Manufacturers should be responsible--maybe if they were they would only produce quality products.

- Government is not doing all it can to be accountable for the products manufactured in B.C. B.C. government and governments in general, are the worst hypocrites in this regard – example of all the products that B.C. imports from China--products that we have no idea what is in them or what sort of manufacturing process was used to produce them. He does not believe it is fair for B.C. to use taxpayers' money to promote clean burning, yet continue to import from countries such as China.
- Recycling the product at the end of its life should be the customers' responsibility and the community's responsibility.
- Education is really important.

Project management

All Skeena-BVLD retailers felt they were contacted in time to register for the program and most were satisfied with the level of input they had into program design. It is worth noting that several significant changes were introduced in 2007, many of them consistent with suggestions offered through the 2004 Exchange evaluation.

All retailers interviewed except one reported that they knew where to get more information or paperwork for the program. All reported that the coordinator supplied information in a timely way, although three retailers commented that it was sometimes difficult to reach Colin. It was suggested that the coordinator get a cell phone.

As mentioned in the section on reasons for participating, one retailer thought this was a mandatory program based on his interaction with the coordinator. In his interview he relayed that "We were told to put up a few poster and handed vouchers and that was that. We were really confused and never really understood how the program worked." It should be noted that this retailer did not report any exchanges and does not specialize in wood burning appliances.

Future involvement

Retailers are open to being involved with future programs and preferred contact methods were recorded for each store. Communication preferences varied widely by retailers, although e-mail was rated high by many. It will be important for the coordinator to confirm that information is received and understood to avoid some of the problems discussed earlier in the report.

One retailer also commented that he thought this phone survey was good, but would have been better if administered right after the program ended, in the month of May. Given that the Skeena-BVLD program is now continuous, there is not really an "end" to the Exchange program so once again, evaluations may be timed to coincide with planning and budgeting exercises.

Overall assessment of Woodstove Exchange Program

"I think it's a great program and would like to see it continue and be involved again"

Retailers were given an opportunity to convey additional comments on the pilot program and suggestions for improvements. Where possible, these comments have been included in the relevant report sections.

- Pilot program was much better than first year because of extra cash incentives.

- Crash course for retailers on Burn It Smart at beginning of season would be good - would be good if homeowners went to one too (this comment from a retailer that doesn't have a woodstove but can tell some people are doing something wrong due to amount of smoke in the area).
- Hope there's a stronger education/bylaw component in the future
- Would really like to see more Burn It Smart get together in the smaller communities, Endako, Topley, Fraser Lake. When something happens in these small communities it really has an impact. Maybe only 5 people show up, but they talk and soon that whole town knows about it. You get 20 people to show up in Smithers and it's just a drop in the bucket.
- Work towards increased customer awareness on what new appliances can be purchased to qualify.
- Would like to see program boundaries extended to include Lakelse area and Kitimat. There is lots of smoke along Queensway, Thornhill area, and at the lake because of all the cabins. Suggest working more closely with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine on education and using their boundaries.

Supplier Survey

Objectives

The primary objective of the survey was to determine the commitment of suppliers to higher level program objectives and what they are willing to do to help us succeed. As a secondary objective, we were looking to determine the right amount of partners for future programs and the amount of control they have over critical program components such as timing and marketing. Given the small number of suppliers to interview and the similarity of the survey to the retailer survey, pre-testing was not done. Suppliers were more likely to respond to open-ended questions or to volunteer information and in general had much stronger opinions about Exchange programs in general.

Reasons for participating in program

Improving local air quality, generating some "off-season" sales, and corporate commitment to social and environmental responsibility were cited as reasons for participation. Open-ended responses were as follows:

- Fits into corporate philosophy of building better stoves.
- Competitors are participating so we have to. Program doesn't work for us.
- Gives customers an opportunity to change out faster and seals the deal.

Wood burning appliance sales

Suppliers were unaware of total number of exchanges so this figure was provided. The impact of the Exchange Program on sales was characterized as neutral or slightly negative by all suppliers. This position was backed up by the following statements:

- "Not really tracking but the [Skeena-BVLD] program is just a small cog in the wheel."
- "Not well marketed from day one, dealers were off-page. Too rushed. Not clear. Dealers are giving discounts everyday anyway. Dealers didn't promote the program very strongly. Let's keep the program

real - both retailers and coordinator could do a better job of marketing to consumers. All distributors have to be involved. 100 stoves over 2 months are not very much.”

- “Doesn't find that exchange program generates new sales but it does bring a positive outlook for the industry. Generally people are ready to change out - they have that awareness. Would like to know how local bylaws are impacting retail sales.”

When prompted for factors outside of the Exchange that affect healthy sales over the last three years, suppliers offered the following explanations:

- Environmental education programs
- High price of energy
- Weather determines when people buy - if it's cold they are thinking about keeping warm.
- Appliances don't last forever - it's just time to replace. Also drawn to new products, general upgrade of house. Idea of new users versus life time users. Very connected to how long you live in your house. Also related to where someone lives - gas is better for busy people.
- Economy is strong - people are spending more; life cycle of stoves is 20 years; people don't move with stoves - new stove.

Impact of B.C. Solid Fuel Appliance Regulation on industry

Suppliers were generally positive about the regulation impacts, citing a level playing field as good for everyone. No direct complaints were voiced regarding the added business costs for research and development and certification associated with changing available models to meet emission standards.

The impact of the regulation could be even better for air quality and the industry if this regulation was enacted by other provinces and made national. Concern was expressed with mass merchants whose products are developed for national markets and may not comply with B.C. standards. Stronger allies with industry can be made if regulations are enforced.

Suppliers mentioned that when regulation was introduced they had a lot of explaining to do to dealers and consumers but this has gotten better.

Retailer – Supplier Relations

“Consumers can be the best route to inform retailer - embarrassing when retailers don’t know something the consumer does.”

To assess if paperwork completion by dealers affected supplier attitudes towards the program, suppliers were asked if retailers provided a sales summary and completed paperwork (related to the Exchange program) in a timely way. The reviews were mixed – some retailers are better than others about their paperwork. One supplier is thoroughly convinced that most retailers hate paperwork and are not good at doing it, and that they are essentially disorganized. The same supplier stated that distributors are addressing this characteristic by introducing “no hassle” rebate programs to consumers and cautioned that many retailers don't (or won't) read literature sent explaining rebate programs.

Timing of in-store promotions

Suppliers were asked if they would support adjusting the timing of the program to the beginning of the wood burning season or early fall. No support was voiced for this option although encouragement was provided for pursuing more dialogue to see when dealers want to have the program.

In general, there is a perception that September, October, November is the worst time and that spring (March, April and May) is a better time of the year in terms of being able to install new units. It was also mentioned that there is an annual industry convention in February or March that might affect the level of engagement. One supplier also noted that March is a difficult time as they are doing booking programs and that April/May might be better.

Length of Exchange Program

Discussions around the length of the program revealed that suppliers are supportive of the BVLD-Skeena pilot program approach to extend the voucher distribution beyond the “traditional” four week exchange window in March. All suppliers supported a minimum 8 week discount period and suggestions were made to have the program run from January 1 to August 31 or to run a continuous year-round program.

Reasons given for supporting a longer discount period included:

- They sell stoves 12 months per year.
- Can match demand during non-production time.
- Need momentum and enough time for consumers to be affected by advertising.

Qualifying appliances

Suppliers were equally split about support for expanding the definition of qualifying old appliances for the exchange to include any wood burning appliance regardless of what is exempted under the Solid Fuel Regulation.

Suppliers in favour of including furnaces and outdoor wood burning boilers saw this innovation as consistent with the intent of the program and hypothesized that these units were originally excluded because they didn't have a product to replace it with.

Suppliers against this innovation want to wait until regulations come out for boilers and furnaces to give manufacturers time to develop new appliances. It was estimated that new products can be developed within 1 to 2 years. A flag was raised concerning “fake” compliant appliances (PG Caddy was provided as an example) and moving targets, noting that what is “good” this year might be different next year.

The expansion of the definition for qualifying new appliances to include any new, high efficiency appliance or system (i.e. gas, electric, heat pumps, geothermal) received no opposition, but a suggestion was made that all new units must be EnerGuide approved.

Program marketing

Supplier beliefs regarding the impact (or perceived impact) of amount and style of marketing on the number of exchanges was tested through a series of questions and an opportunity to provide advice.

Suppliers are further removed from local marketing and many were unfamiliar with the details of the campaign and comments must be reviewed in this context. Only one supplier had seen or heard any of the ads for the Skeena-BVLD pilot program and was satisfied with the style and amount of advertising done based on his exposure.

Frustration was expressed by those who were unfamiliar with program details and it was suggested that a marketing package be sent to suppliers so they are “in the loop”. Another supplier commented that in general, not enough advertising dollars are set aside to really push the program; we need to be more aggressive and creative.

Insightful and helpful responses were provided to improve relationships with suppliers and to improve program marketing in general. For example, a statement was made that retailers and distributors are getting bored of programs and that we need to do something different and exciting. The following ideas were offered for consideration:

- Link Exchange campaign to popularity of being green - burning wood is GREEN. Talk to Regency staff about research to support this statement. Burning wood is natural and part of the natural cycle of life when done properly with a good stove.
- Tie into Global Warming campaigns - hot topic, cold reality.
- Link to pine beetle wood.

When asked about the amount and style of advertising done by dealers to support the Exchange, once again suppliers were generally not aware of local retailer marketing efforts and there was some doubt that much extra effort would have been put in by retailers. A reference was made to Burn It Smart programs; one supplier felt that these programs are only as good as the people giving it and recommended that dealers should have training and be able to educate everyone coming in the store door.

Suppliers were asked if they would like to see a standard level of advertising by all participating retailers and this suggestion received mixed reviews. One supplier felt retailers have the right to decide how much and what kind of advertising they would like to do, while another described his proactive approach to increasing dealer marketing for his products. This dealer will only advertise specific brand names if the dealer also participates and works with advertisers to create a cooperative marketing program (i.e. supplier pays 50% of cost and advertiser must solicit dealer for remaining 50%).

Along these lines, suppliers were asked if they voluntarily contributed advertising dollars during the Exchange to boost retailer efforts. No definitive responses were recorded but it was noted that co-op advertising programs are popular between dealers and suppliers, although it seemed unlikely that any co-op advertising dollars were used during the March-April blitz. One supplier noted that he “took \$\$ off price of stove instead”.

Suppliers expressed a willingness and in some cases, a friendly insistence to work with program coordinators to share marketing expertise. Specific recommendations on how to proceed with this approach were offered:

- Consult with Zigi. Shouldn't have to have marketing professionals.
- Run ideas past Frank Walsh at MTL Marketing – he has 25 years experience as a retailer and distributor so can cover all angles.

- Contact Regency marketing staff at 604-946-5155 and ask for Amanda Hillard and Debra Milachamp
- Get dealers to provide cooperative marketing dollars.
- Make sure suppliers are in the loop before retailers.
- Do a big blitz 6-8 weeks prior to program starting. Ask advertising professionals - what is the most successful way to do it for timing.

Product stewardship

Building on current momentum in the province for extended producer responsibility, a question was asked to test awareness of this concept and attitudes towards an increasing industry role for end-of-life management of products introduced to market. As with the retailers, this question posed a challenge for suppliers; time constraints were also an issue for this response.

The role of both government and industry in environmental management of products is changing to consider the whole life cycle of products that are manufactured and/or marketed in B.C. Life cycle responsibility includes designing for low impact during the manufacturing stage as well as during consumer use and at the end of the product life. For example, beverage containers and some electronics are now under "industry stewardship programs". By participating in Woodstove Exchange Programs, your company is voluntarily moving in this direction. What do you think the future role of retailers and suppliers should be for changing out old stoves?

Here is what some of the suppliers had to say:

- The concept of exchanging is good - as performance standards increase, change-outs become more valuable.
- Manufacturers build to regulation of the day - regulators should be responsible.
- B.C. Regulation is 13 years old now and is obviously not working. These are great questions but there are so many other people involved. Retailer should be responsible - has direct contact with consumer. He has opportunity to get into customer's house and sell other products too.
- Distributor is the liaison between the manufacturer and the retailer – he is a facilitator. He has to believe in the Exchange program outside of the financial game i.e. good for environment, make B.C. a great place to live.

Project management

Four basic questions were asked regarding project management with respect to level of input into program design, clarity of program details, and access to information and paperwork. Satisfaction with the level of input ranged from satisfaction (“don't need input”) to irritation over not having enough input in a timely way. A request was made for suppliers to receive all program related information and marketing before retailers.

In general, suppliers do not need ongoing interaction and support. An orientation package at the beginning with a name and phone number and program details, an invitation to provide input on marketing initiatives as noted in the discussion on marketing, and periodic progress reports on environmental and social gains would be sufficient.

Future involvement

Suppliers were asked to provide an ideal time and method of communication for providing feedback during future exchanges. Short phone calls are preferred over any other form of communication – e-mails were not cited by any suppliers as an effective way to get feedback.

As for timing for feedback, February and March should be avoided due to industry events. Depending on location of global industry conferences, it may be worthwhile to set up an information booth or session (i.e. Reno is a good bet, Atlanta is not).

Ongoing information regarding provincial initiatives is best provided through the Association. Advertising in the monthly print magazine, *Hearth and Home* is recommended as worthwhile. Don Hiebert has offered to co-write an article on the benefits of Woodstove Exchange programs from a suppliers' perspective in this publication with an Exchange program coordinator or consultant.

Overall assessment of Woodstove Exchange Program

Suppliers are supportive of the intentions of the Woodstove Exchange Program and would like to see more success with the number of exchanges and number of residential operators who are properly educated in appliance operation. The innovations in program components and incentive levels in the Skeena-BVLD program were well-received. Unfortunately, due to lack of exposure, comments on the social marketing materials were minimal but some useful suggestions for future campaigns were provided.

Frustration over the minimal impact of woodstove exchanges in general was expressed, and this evaluation process and the development of a coordinator template were viewed as positive steps to correct existing problems. There are some feelings in the industry that the program has a huge potential for success but due to inadequate resources and too much politics, the number of exchanges to date is far lower than it should be. The Ministry and regional coordinators are urged to think through the entire program carefully, market it properly, and don't be forced into running a program prematurely because funding is available.

Additional supplier recommendations:

- Include the insurance industry as a major partner for the next program iteration.
- Expand campaign to include changing out inefficient gas heaters
- Send final report and Coordinator Toolkit to suppliers.

Coordinator Survey

Project management for the Skeena-BVLD pilot project was shared by Colin Macleod and Ben Weinstein; with Footprint Environmental Strategies providing additional support as needed on behalf of the BVLD Airshed Management Society and under contract to Environment Canada. The following discussion represents responses primarily by Colin Macleod, supplemented by the consultant.

Economic indicators

Short term jobs created by the project included the primary coordinator for an average of 20 hours per week from January 2007 to November 2007. Program administration and general support, equal to ten hours per week, was supplied by Ben Weinstein, from MoE Skeena Region for this same period. A consultant was supplied by Environment Canada to get the program up and running from December 2006 to March 2007 equivalent to 100 hours. This contribution included providing orientation for new staff, developing a communications plan, and formulating a workplan for the key implementation team in the Skeena region (Colin, Ben and Laurie).

An additional 20 hours was put in by a wood training expert for the delivery of two Burn It Smart workshops. Media and graphic design professionals contributed another 80 hours. A considerable amount of hours were also contributed by the team members for the program evaluation project.

Three consulting contracts were let to support the evaluation: Environics Research Group to polish and administer the consumer awareness, participant and non-participant surveys with accompanying report; Erika Schmidt of the Frause Group to compile contributions and develop an evaluation template; and Laurie Gallant of Footprint Environmental to assist Rebecca Freedman, from MoE headquarters, in scoping out the evaluation project, develop draft surveys for each target group, administer the retailer and supplier surveys, and produce this report.

Total hours for all consultants and hours contributed by MOE staff in Cariboo, Victoria and Skeena offices have not been tallied but are likely in the range of 200- 300 hours. In addition, the Fraser Basin Council and BC Transit contributed funding to pay for 20 hours of AMS staff time to develop and deliver a presentation and website detailing components of the Skeena-BVLD woodstove exchange program at the B.C. Clean Air Forum(March 2007) and on the cleanairkit.ca website (November 2007).

Community involvement and partnerships

Volunteers

Volunteer hours were contributed by the Houston Junior Fire Fighters and the Smithers Fire Department to distribute doorknob hangers in the range of 24 and eight hours respectively. The involvement of the fire departments was invaluable and it is hoped that this arrangement can continue.

Additional volunteer time in the range of 60 hours was contributed by the BVLD Airshed Management Society's Board of Directors (nine in total) to provide guidance on program development and delivery. Paid staff time was also provided by AMS to promote the project through their website, newsletters, public meetings and interactions with government partners, in the range of 18 hours in 2007.

Clean Air Day activities in June 2007 were organized by AMS in partnership with One Sky for Smithers. While the focus of that day was on green commuting, information and education related to wood burning was also given out in the eight hours contributed by AMS staff and volunteers.

Two local musicians (James Hay and Betty Goodacre) and a radio ad producer (Jonathon Hartman) worked with Footprint to develop two radio ads, volunteering a total of 5 hours.

Local officials and civil servants

Presentations were given on this project to a total of eight municipal councils and Regional District boards, covering a highway distance of 400 km from Terrace to Burns Lake. Partnership support was requested to reduce costs associated with recycling of wood stoves, building permit fees, and promotion of both the exchange program and related bylaws.

MLA Dennis Mackay and Mayor for the District of Houston Sharon Smith were both present for the project launch in Houston, BC, each contributing about two hours of time. MP Nathan Cullen's office also contributed two hours of time to help with promotion of the program.

Extensive work was done to support the development and roll-out of wood burning appliance bylaws. The Town of Smithers hired Footprint Environmental to develop a bylaw framework and build support from adjacent jurisdictions to enact similar regulations in the form of a bylaw workshop in April 2006. Subsequently, the Town of Smithers, the District of Houston and the Village of Burns Lake adopted bylaws with complementary strategies for reducing unnecessary wood smoke and supporting the change out of inefficient units not meeting emission standards. Civil servants involved with this task were primarily planners and administrators, but also fire chiefs (Houston and Burns Lake in particular) and bylaw enforcement staff.

The District of Houston, Village of Burns Lake and Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine also offered rebates to area residents and assisted with additional promotions for this new incentive. See **Table 1** for a summary of available vouchers. The total number of hours contributed by civil servants in support of bylaws was likely in the range of 100 hours including participation in the workshop and administration of local government rebates. Note that the Town of Smithers will be offering rebates for the 2008 season.

Retailers

A total of 13 retailers participated in the Skeena-BVLD pilot, and another 6 in the Cariboo region. The amount of involvement outside of in-store sales varied by retailer but some were quite active in promotions at trade shows, fall fairs and burn it smart workshops. An additional 40 hours was likely contributed for these extra activities. Some reluctance to contribute \$200 towards a cooperative advertising program was experienced in the Skeena region by retailers.

Public education

A demonstration trailer was custom built for the BVLD-Skeena Region consisting of an older, uncertified RSF stove and a brand new QuadraFire stove. This trailer was used at a total of 11 events between August 2006 and August 2007, with an estimated 225 hours contributed by MOE and AMS staff. Through these live demonstrations and information tents, hundreds of residents were informed about the Exchange Programs and how to reduce emissions from wood burning appliances. While detailed tracking of audiences is not available, Colin estimates that the demographics profile was roughly 70% male, 60% between 40-60 years of age, and 80% rural.

A Burn-It-Smart workshop was also held in both Smithers and Houston in spring 2007 by Zigi Gadomski, an unexpected arrangement made possible because he was leading a WETT training workshop in Prince George and wanted to borrow our demonstration trailer. Perhaps because of the minimal planning time available, attendance was low with an average attendance of eight residents at each event. An estimated six hours of staff time supported these workshops. There are at least six WETT trained professionals in the region so in theory; workshops could be delivered by these individuals.

Colouring pages with a clean air and wood smoke theme were also developed and provided to children at events. A colouring book is now being developed building on the themes and characters used in marketing materials. Events specifically for First Nations and seniors did not take place although opportunities and partnerships are being explored.

Outreach & tools

A detailed accounting of additional specific outreach events, budgets, and hours spent was not available for this report but a partial summary is provided below for the period of January to September 2007.

- Eight Newspaper, television, and radio interviews
- Two PSA Announcements
- Seven newspaper articles
- 200+ telephone Inquiries from the public
- Unknown number of website hits
- 450 flyers distributed (doorknob hangers)
- Print ads - 8 runs x 5 community papers
- Radio ads - 5 different ads 3 to 4 runs per day on 2 stations
- Inserts in seven First Nation band and community newsletters
- Insert in Thornhill utility bill in partnership with Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (200 homes)
- 50 Posters distributed through BVLD-Skeena region
- Business card size referral cards.
- Moisture meters and DVDs in community libraries (done by AMS and MOE in 2006)

Colin estimates that \$1500 was spent on the doorknob hangers, \$2000 on radio ads, and \$2000 per run for the newspaper ads (total of \$16,000 for eight runs). These expenses alone total almost \$20,000. Printing costs for posters, vouchers, and referral cards are missing but may add another \$2000 to this total. All other outreach tools listed above are “free” outside of professional service fees and in-house staffing costs. Contributions to these costs were provided by Northern Health (\$5000), retailers (unconfirmed total contribution but if 10 of 13 contributed \$200, then \$2000), and the remainder provided by B.C. Ministry of Environment and contributions-in-kind by partners previously mentioned and free media publicity.

Sustainability

For the purposes of this report, we are using a cut-off date of September 30, 2007. As of that date, 141 old units had been changed-out through the exchange program, all of them decommissioned and recycled. Since some home owners installed the new units themselves, we estimate that approximately 100 new units were professionally installed.

Using a value of 94.3 kg/stove/season, we estimate reduced PM emissions in the order of 13 296 kg. Assuming new appliances owners use 1/3 less wood of a typical four cord winter supply, we estimate that 230 cords of wood will not be burned this season.

Messages and approaches

While a detailed communications plan was developed for the pilot program, the coordinator adapted the campaign in order to manage a variety of unexpected developments. Basic social marketing approaches and messages were applied as follows:

- Financial barrier: offered rebates, in-store discounts, financing option through credit unions and promoted economic benefits of exchanging in communications.
- Created and tested several ads in the community to determine best response, then developed SuperStove character and Old Belcher villain to help with program recognition.
- Used positive testimonials for promotions in newspaper and radio ads.
- Used humour in five different radio ad scripts.
- Created two versions door knob hangers and had volunteers hang them in targeted neighbourhoods .
- Had participants sign vouchers with pledge to burn smart and keep neighbourhood clean.
- Attended 11 community events and trade shows with burn demonstration trailer to educate and visually demonstrate need for exchange.
- Safety is an important motivator: we teamed up with fire chiefs in fire-prevention week to highlight this benefit of upgrading old wood burning appliances and using them properly.

Two messages were repeated in printed campaign materials:

1. Use Less wood and Be Good to your Neighbourhood!
2. SuperStove - Saving our Air one stove at a time!

Evaluation of marketing materials and outreach efforts

Best response

Colin felt that participating in local community events and tradeshow got the best response and would recommend getting out in the community to find local ways to get the message out for future efforts and similar projects.

Most popular questions

- What qualifies for an exchange (i.e. fireplaces, furnaces, pellet stoves, inserts etc)?
- Why doesn't the program cover the entire Skeena region?
- How do I complete the voucher?

Most valuable outreach materials

In order of value: Posters, Media Kit materials (news release, fact sheets, backgrounder), and cleanairplan.ca website.

What worked

- I think that it was good to have central contact for retailers and general public
- I really like the characters and promotions that we created. They have been really well received.
- The \$250 rebates definitely helped to encourage people to exchange.

- Level of municipal partner involvement was great. The municipal by-laws and additional rebates really helped

Coordinator Recommendations

1. Contact program participants to check level of satisfaction with new appliance and to offer burn it smart workshop and education.
2. Develop and deliver material geared to First Nations, youth, and other sectors that may need special messaging.
3. Increase education and hands-on burning learning with Burn It Smart workshops or in-store education.
4. Improve explanation of what qualifies for exchange and increase opportunities for getting the message out about other types of heating appliances.
5. Voucher system worked well, but needed better tracking system as a significant number of vouchers were in circulation but not being returned. Already implementing our solution of: providing a tracking form to any agency distributing vouchers, including an expiry date on vouchers, requesting that retailers only hand vouchers out at time of sale.
6. Timing of program is questionable, may be easier to get attention in early fall.
7. Would like to see the program boundaries expanded to include the entire Skeena area as many folks in communities outside of Terrace and BVLD felt left out.
8. Could improve communication between local coordinators and supplier/distributors. I had no contact with any and was fully caught by surprise when program was extended thru April.
9. Large disparity in awareness, knowledge and involvement between participating retailers. Perhaps needed more store visits and opportunities for retailer/staff training and feedback
10. Need to find better way to promote and increase attendance at burn it smart workshops and improve educational component of program.
11. We tried many different forms of media and messaging, but still need to find better way of attracting and educating public.

Other Feedback

As indicated in the Coordinator Evaluation, the Skeena-BVLD pilot project relied on contributions from community partners as follows:

- BVLD Airshed Management Society
- Northern Health

- Municipalities
- Regional Districts
- Media
- Credit Unions

Relationships with all of these partners are mature through the development and implementation of the BVLD Airshed Management Plan, which began in 2002. As a result, feedback is ongoing and adaptations to program activities and communications are made regularly based on these comments. Formal surveys were not conducted with these partners, however, follow-up with each partner based on observations and recommendations recorded in this report will be taking place over the next few months.

Consumer feedback provided in the Environics report on the costs and benefits of new appliances is presented in Appendix A to provide a more rounded perspective on the economic incentives offered. It should be noted that with all other expenses in, the minimum cost of changing out an old appliance is \$2000.00.

Findings from the same report show that **satisfaction with the current wood-burning appliance is a significant obstacle to participation in the Exchange Program**, as is the cost of the change-over, even after the incentives offered. These findings support statements from suppliers and retailers regarding a 20 year life expectancy of appliances and many consumers being ready to exchange when they come in the door, regardless of the level of incentive. Some interesting recommendations are contained in that report for overcoming these barriers and should be considered alongside the recommendations offered by the retailers, suppliers and coordinators. These recommendations are cited in Table 2 for convenience.

Table 2 – Recommendations based on Consumer Surveys

1. From a customer satisfaction perspective there is no need to change the current voucher and voucher redemption process. No significant problems were reported with getting information about how the vouchers worked or with redeeming them.
2. Intensify efforts to ensure that all details of the program, particularly all financial incentives, are widely disseminated. Print ads were the most cited source of awareness about the program among the general public and participants. The majority of non-participants indicate that inserts in utility or property tax bills are a preferred channel to receive information about the Exchange Program.
3. Streamline the elements of the program across the participating communities. As it now stands, different financial incentives are offered in different communities within the region. A unified approach will aid communications efforts and will give the potential participants a clearer idea of just how much participation in the program can benefit them.
4. Continue to promote the need for new wood-burning techniques to maximize the efficiency of new wood-burning appliances, through both the Burn-it Smart workshops and other means. Given the interest in receiving information about the Exchange Program through bill inserts, this may be an excellent vehicle to also promote new wood-burning techniques and the Burn-it Smart workshops.

The consultant supports all recommendations, but disagrees with the need to harmonize financial incentives across communities. While communications would certainly be streamlined, retailer and supplier discounts, as well as local government incentives are a matter of agency discretion and cannot be dictated by Exchange Program Coordinators.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Pilot Woodstove Exchange Program and Evaluation were highly successful in providing insights for future programs. A large number of recommendations have been provided by retailers, suppliers, and coordinators throughout this report. Major recommendations based on findings and grouped by program components are provided below for consideration.

Timing and Duration of Program

Given that retailers and suppliers have the ability to and do offer sale prices throughout the year, it is recommended that local coordinators establish a continuous program of education and distribution of vouchers as resources allow.

A marketing blitz for an eight week period in the spring April-May when in-store discounts can be coordinated and guaranteed can also be explored.

Communications

Follow-up should be done with all retailers based on their survey responses, with particular attention given to the retailer who though he was obligated to participate under a bylaw clause and the retailer who was unaware of the extension. Work with suppliers to communicate with retailers on how April extension was decided and the role of coordinator in this decision as part of this follow-up.

Pay attention to the sequence of information distribution. Start with suppliers, then retailers, other partners and finally media.

Marketing and Education

Additional advertising on a co-operative basis can be done with retailers to support in-store discounts or coordinators may simply choose to add a line that says “check with local retailers for in-store specials”.

Develop a marketing strategy with input from retailers and suppliers and **follow it**. Several suggestions by retailers and suppliers are included in this report and provide a good starting point.

The cartoon characters used in the marketing are great, but may be creating confusion about qualifying appliances. An extra effort is needed to highlight the wide range of old and new appliances that are eligible under the Exchange Program.

Public education needs significantly increased efforts. Television ads, point of purchase materials, and training of both firewood suppliers and retail staff should be priorities.

Qualifying Appliances

Proceed with expanded definitions of qualifying old and new appliances established under the Skeena-BVLD Pilot program.

Require that all replacement units meet minimum efficiency and emission standards such as EnerGuide.

Regulatory Support

Lobby for national emission standards to be met by all wood burning appliances retailed in Canada.

Provide suppliers and detailers with consumer-friendly explanation of B.C. Regulation and emission standards.

Change the B.C. regulation to include furnaces and outdoor wood burning boilers with a 24 month phase-in period and additional consultation with industry.

Recycling of old appliances

Further evaluation is needed of the consumer experience of this part of the program. Suggestions for dedicated staffing one day per week need to be considered in the context of overall landfill or transfer station operations. In general, these facilities are understaffed and could benefit from a dedicated recycling marshal.

Consideration for end of life management for all eligible appliances is needed.

Voucher system

Modifications to the voucher system have already been made; no further changes are recommended.

The voucher as a commitment tool does not seem to be working however. A new commitment tool is needed and can be developed as part of the new marketing plan with input from retailers and suppliers.

Appendices:

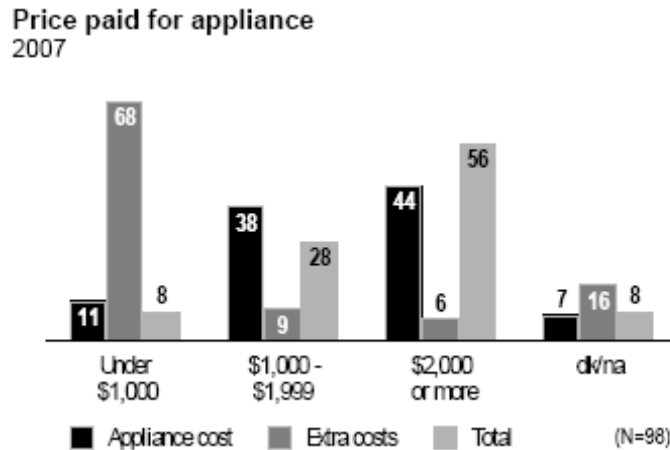
- A. Costs and Benefits of New Appliances
- B. Retailer Survey template, retailer survey compiled results, open-ended responses, individual responses
- C. Supplier Survey template, supplier survey compiled results, open-ended responses individual responses
- D. Coordinator Survey

Appendices B, C, and D have been provided in electronic format to B.C. Ministry of Environment.

Appendix A – Costs and Benefits of New Appliances

Cost of appliance.

Three-quarters of program participants (74%) paid between \$1,000 and \$2,999 for their new appliance (not including installation), with 38 percent paying \$1,000 to \$1,999. With installation and all other costs included, one-quarter of program participants (24%) paid \$3,000 or more and 32 percent paid \$2,000 to \$2,999.

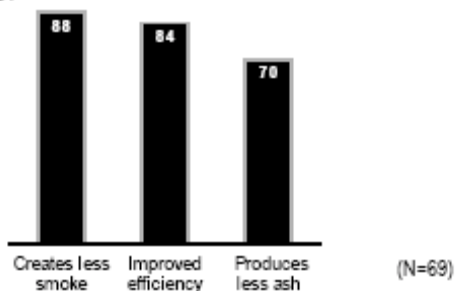


Benefits of New Appliance

Virtually all who are using their new appliance say it is operating to expectations, with reduced smoke and greater efficiency commonly observed. Four in ten are interested in additional information to maximize appliance efficiency.

Two-thirds (67%) report that their new wood-burning appliance is operating to their expectations, with most of the remainder (27%) reporting that they have not yet used their appliance.

New appliance benefits 2007



Among three potential benefits of newer wood-burning appliances assessed, the most commonly observed is that it creates less smoke (88%). Almost as many (84%) agree that their new appliance is more efficient. It is interesting to note that virtually all (96%) of those who paid less than \$2,000 for their new appliance report increased efficiency. The benefit least commonly observed is that less ash is produced; however, this benefit is still reported by seven in ten (70%).