

FortisBC Energy Conservation Assistance Program participation with Osoyoos Indian Band

Carol Suhan
Manager, Conservation and Energy Management

Darlene George,
Osoyoos Indian Band Housing Manager

September 2016



What we're going to talk about

- Background
- FortisBC Energy Conservation Assistance Program
 - Goals
 - Measures
- Osoyoos Indian Band challenges
- Program participation
- Lessons Learned

- 1 million customers

About FortisBC



- Natural gas
 - 1 million customers
- Electricity
 - 166,000 customers
- Five First Nations

About Osoyoos Indian Band

- Member of the O.N.A. (Okanagan Nation Alliance)
- 560 members living on and off reserve
- Achieved a high level success through economic development
 - Nk'Mip Campground and RV Park
 - Nk'Mip Corner and Nk'Mip Gas and Convenience
 - Nk'Mip Vineyards
 - Oliver Red-Mix
 - Numerous partnerships such as Spirit Ridge and Nk'Mip Cellars
- Chief Clarence Louie – over 25 years



Energy Conservation Assistance Program

- Challenge

- Energy poverty
- High utility bills
- No access to capital to make improvements

- Goals

- Reduce energy consumption and utility bills
- Improve customer satisfaction



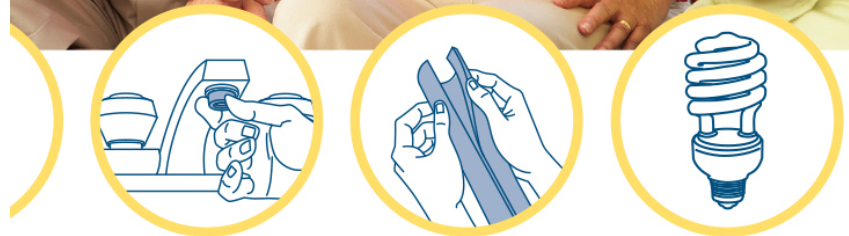
Energy Conservation Assistance Program

- No cost, full service program
 - Energy assessment
 - Direct installed products
 - Lighting
 - Low-flow water measures
 - Refrigerators
 - Insulation
 - Furnaces
 - Advice
- Heat Pumps
 - Partnership with MEM



Energy Conservation Assistance Program

- Participation far exceeding expectations
 - Goal was 250 single-family homes
 - Increased to 1000 homes
- Work closely with service organizations



Osoyoos Indian Band – The Challenge

- Upset members
 - Didn't trust FortisBC
 - Most homes have electricity heat
 - Rising rates – two-tiered billing system
 - High utility bills



Osoyoos Indian Band – The Challenge

- Upset members
 - Didn't think the program would make a difference
 - Don't understand how they're using energy in their homes and the savings that can be realized by conserving usage
 - Many members don't have the extra money to make the necessary efficiency improvements to their homes



What We Did

- Started conversation with Band
- Meeting with Chief and Council, the community and FortisBC
 - Members openly expressed their frustration and distrust
 - FortisBC listened



What We Did

- Most important! Partnered with Housing Manager, Darlene George
- Believes in energy conservation!!
- Identified and addressed barriers



What We Did

- Facebook
- Newsletters
- Worked directly with Social Services Department
- Filled out applications and had them ready for signatures
- Coordinated with homeowners and renters



ary and Confidential

Osoyoos Indian Band – The Results

- Participation rate:
 - 100% of low-income households
 - 53% participation of all Band and privately owned OIB member homes
- Increase of interest once program started
- Customers are happier
 - Reaching out to FortisBC for more information



Lessons Learned

- Large information gap re: energy usage
- Education is where we need to focus – conservation!
- Involve management team(s)
- Person-to-person as much as possible
- Develop report – become a team member
- Ensure on-going open communication



Lessons Learned

- Band members want to be engaged – to save money and help the environment
- Need to offer assistance when necessary to reach project goals and participation levels



Next Steps

- Further collaboration
 - ONA Energy Champion
 - Community engagement
- Additional funding for energy efficiency improvements
 - Coordinated collaboration with other organizations?





**For further information,
please contact:**

Carol.Suhan@fortisbc.com or 250-469-8116

dgeorge@oib.ca or 250-498-3444

Find FortisBC at:

Fortisbc.com



604-576-7000