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2007 SOLID WASTE PROMOTION AND EDUCATION UPDATE

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 21, 2007, from the Director, Solid Waste and Administration:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report summarizes the promotion and education activities organized by York Region's Solid Waste Management Branch for 2007.

3. BACKGROUND

The Solid Waste Management Committee approved the Joint Waste Diversion Strategy (Clause 3 of Report No. 3 of the Regional Solid Waste Management Committee) on October 19, 2006. The strategy set a target of a minimum of 65% diversion for the Region by 2010. To reach this target, residents of York Region need to have a complete understanding of the Region's waste management programs and services as well as motivation to participate in the various diversion programs.

Waste reduction activities and advertising campaigns provide residents with opportunities to obtain information to assist them in understanding how the programs works and what they can be doing at home. These activities also reinforce the existing promotional and educational materials. Together, advertising campaigns supported with public events and public outreach, are more effective at educating residents than information alone.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Region's Waste Management Branch hosts events and activities, attends public events and runs advertising campaigns to better educate the public on the waste diversion initiatives taking place in York Region.

4.1 Special Events attended by the Region's Waste Management Branch

Public events and activities give the residents an occasion to experience York Region's facilities and serve to reinforce the Region's waste diversion message.

Earth Week (April 22 to 28, 2007)

Earth Day is an annual international celebration where more than an estimated six million Canadians join 500 million people in over 180 countries in various events and projects addressing environmental concerns and issues. In Canada, Earth Day has developed into Earth Week due to the overwhelming response and participation. The Waste Management Branch took part in a number of events throughout Earth Week in 2007 as summarized below.

Aurora Home Show

From April 20 to 22, 2007, York Region attended the Aurora Home Show and exhibited the Durham/York Residual Waste Environmental Assessment Study display. Branch staff ran the Waste Management Centre video, as well as videos demonstrating energy-from-waste and composting facility operations. Branch staff was present to answer questions, issue surveys and distribute informational materials and promotional items to the public. The information was very well received and approximately 5,000 residents attended the event. A survey of over 125 residents reaffirmed that Branch advertising is reaching the public. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed recalled seeing Waste Management Branch related advertising in the last four months. Of that 77%, approximately 60% saw the advertising in the local newspapers, 42% in the municipal waste calendars and over 15% in York Region brochures.

Litter Round-Up

A Litter Roundup event took place on Thursday, April 26, 2007. This is the first year for this event in April, as in previous years it has taken place in October. Grade 5 students from schools in the York Region District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board were encouraged to clean up litter found not only on their properties but also from areas within the schools' neighbourhood. Notices were sent to both school boards in March and online registration packages were available for teachers. Tim Horton's donated thank you gifts to all the participants of the 2007 Litter Roundup event. Both school boards provided garbage bags and gloves for their students. The 2007 Litter Roundup had over 3,800 participants from 50 schools that collected 738 bags of litter (approximately 6,700 kg).

York Region Administrative Centre

From April 23 to 27, the Branch's Household Hazardous Waste display was set up in the Region's Great Hall along with other departments' exhibits. The display reinforced the latest Household Hazardous Waste Campaign that began running in the newspapers the week of April 22. This display was available for viewing by over 1,500 full and part-time Regional employees and outside visitors.

Student Participation Day

On April 25, four classes of children in Grade 5 from Devins Drive Public School and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Elementary School visited York Region's Great Hall where the Waste Management Branch spoke to the children about the various waste management programs, provided activity sheets and conducted a "Waste Race". The race required the children to take trash items from one pile and place it with the proper program (Blue Box, Green Bin, Household Hazardous Waste, garbage). Winners received a small prize and all participants received the Branch's promotional and educational material. Activities such as this allow children to learn in an interactive and fun atmosphere.

Compost Awareness Week (May 6 to 12, 2007)

Compost Awareness Week was developed to raise the profile of composting as an environmentally beneficial method of waste management. The challenge has been to educate the public on its importance and role in waste reduction and to encourage participation.

On May 12, the Region hosted a backyard composter sale and a series of four composting and vermicomposting seminars at the Waste Management Centre. Branch staff sold 250 composters for \$10 each, up 67% from 2006. All four seminars were fully attended (approximately 112 attendees) and very well received. Those attending the seminars were also eligible to enter a ballot to win a free vermicomposter donated by Cathy's Crawly Composters or one of two gift certificates donated by Home Depot. An on-site survey was conducted determining that 70% of respondents saw the Region's advertising in the Era Banner while 16% saw it in the Richmond Hill Liberal.

Public Works Week (May 20 to 26, 2007)

National Public Works Week is an annual reminder of how public works departments contribute to the everyday life of residents and involves the entire Transportation and Works Department of York Region.

Student Day Events

On May 22 and May 24, the Solid Waste Management Branch hosted groups of Grade 5 students who visited the Waste Management Centre's Education Room where they viewed the Waste Management Centre video, received a presentation by staff with a question and answer period and also worked on a reuse activity.

Open House at the Waste Management Centre

On May 26, an open house was held at the Waste Management Centre where tours were conducted throughout the facility and trucks were on display. Throughout this event, the Branch's Energy-from-Waste display was exhibited at the head of the site tours. Staff was on hand to distribute information and answer questions. Drop-off stations were also set up for residents to deliver shredded paper for recycling, reusable items for Goodwill and construction and demolition materials for Habitat for Humanity. Branch staff was also selling backyard composters at the site. Results of the day included delivery of approximately 200 tours of the Waste Management Centre, collection of 115 kg of shredded paper, diversion of over five tonnes of material to Goodwill, diversion of over 450 kg of material to Habitat for Humanity, and the sale of approximately 100 composters to residents.

A craft area for children was also organized in the Education Room where crafts were built from reusable materials. Approximately 100 children visited the craft room where they also received activity books, promotional items, refreshments, popcorn and cookies. The Waste Management Centre video was playing in the Education Room, so that the children and parents were able to view the facility while it was in operation.

Canadian Environment Week (June 3 to 9, 2007)

During Environment Week, thousands of events are held in communities, workplaces, and schools across Canada to raise awareness of environmental issues and to promote activities aimed at preserving, protecting and restoring our environment.

Mount Albert Sports Day

The Mount Albert Sports Day tradition is an annual event that took place this year from June 1 to 3, 2007. The Solid Waste Branch staff exhibited the composting display to complement the Green Bin launch taking place in East Gwillimbury this September. Numerous residents stopped by the booth during the festival to gather information and ask questions of the Region's staff.

Windfall Ecology Festival

On June 9 and 10, Branch staff attended the Windfall Ecology Festival where the Energy-from-Waste display was exhibited. Staff was present to answer questions, hand out information and distribute promotional items. Approximately 100 residents stopped by the display to have their questions answered.

4.2 Re-Use Events

The Region is continuing its partnership with Goodwill Industries for the fourth year in a row and continues to encourage local municipalities to support this worthwhile cause. Four re-use events have been planned for this year to educate the public on alternative options for disposal of their household items, clothing, etc. One re-use event was held at the Waste Management Centre during Public Works Week in the spring and the other events will take place in the fall at the Region's Household Hazardous Waste Depot in Vaughan, Hillcrest Mall in Richmond Hill and at the Waste Management Centre during

Waste Reduction Week in October. So far this year, over 5.5 tonnes of material has been diverted by the Branch's efforts to Goodwill and Habitat for Humanity.

Waste Reduction Week (October 15 to 21, 2007)

Waste Reduction Week is a National event where activities have been planned across the country to educate and demonstrate how to minimize unnecessary waste disposal and reduce the generation of pollution.

On Saturday October 20, Branch staff is planning an open house at the Waste Management Centre. Activities include tours of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF), a reuse event with Goodwill and Habitat for Humanity, shredded paper collection and possibly a composter sale or mulch giveaway.

4.3 Durham/York Residual Waste Environmental Assessment Study

The Region has conducted several public information sessions this year updating the public on topics such as the announcement of the short list of potential sites for the energy-from-waste facility, the generic risk assessment feasibility study as well as an overall study update. To communicate these sessions, the Region placed quarter page ads, and in some cases page dominant ads, in full colour in all the local papers and the *Toronto Star*. In conjunction with these ads, quarter page, black and white technical ads were also placed in all the local papers. The ads ran weekly at least two weeks before the session dates and in some instances three weeks in advance.

4.4 Advertising Campaigns

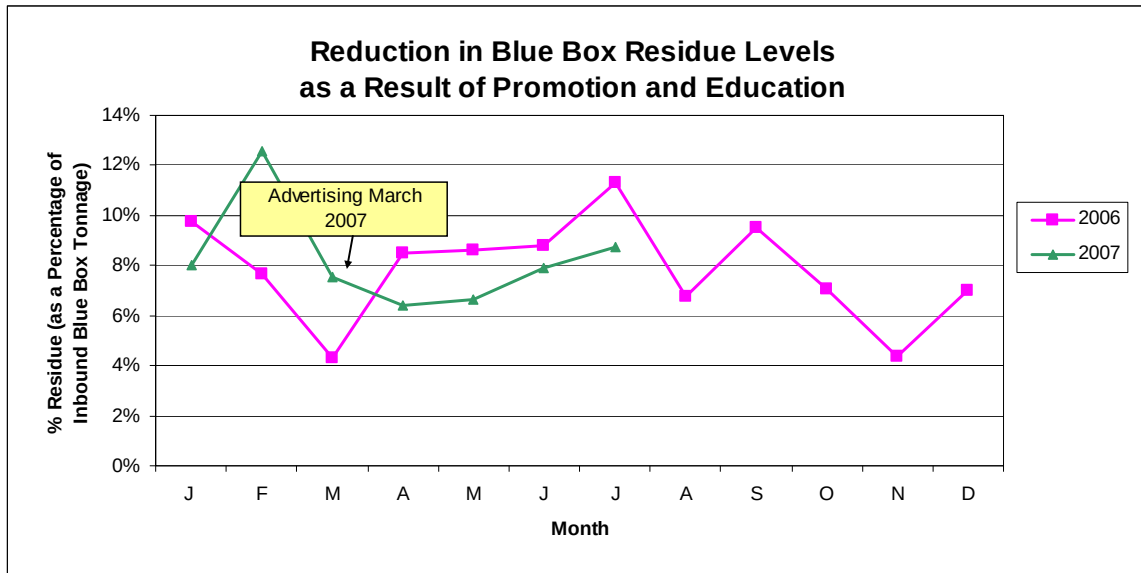
In an effort to support the waste initiatives outlined in the Waste Diversion Strategy and to reach the target of 65% waste diversion, Branch staff revealed several new advertising initiatives this year as outlined below.

4.4.1 Blue Box Recycling

Earlier this year, blue box contamination by plastic bags and other materials was creating serious operation and efficiency issues at the Material Recovery Facility at the Waste Management Centre. In response to this concern, a series of Blue Box ads ran during the month of March outlining the proper set-out of Blue Box materials. The ads ran for four weeks in all local papers, as well as the "zoned" *Toronto Star*, which distributes the *Star* to a specific geographic area, such as York Region only, therefore reaching York Region residents at a much more economical rate than the regular *Toronto Star*. The ads reminded residents that recyclables are to be placed directly in their Blue Box and not in plastic bags; that recyclables need to have all plastic wrap removed before placing in the Blue Box (i.e. water bottle and pop can trays); and that shredded paper can not be recycled in the Blue Box program. The ads were graphically based illustrating how recycling should be set out. The ads were also used as a vehicle to educate residents on what takes place once the recyclables reach the recycling facility. The residents were further directed to our website where the reasoning behind these ads and the sorting process at the facility was explained in more detail. In reviewing the residue levels at the Material Recovery Facility, the results show a year-on-year decrease in the residue levels

after the advertising ran in March of 2007 (see Chart 1). This reduction in residue is partially due to a lower level of contamination entering the facility through curbside collection.

Chart 1



4.4.2 Household Hazardous Waste

To further reinforce the success of the Household Hazardous Waste campaign in 2006, a new campaign for this program was launched this spring. While the campaign in 2006 was more informational, focusing on what household materials are hazardous and where they should be disposed, the 2007 'Cause & Effect' campaign was designed to act more as a motivational campaign to illustrate why residents need to bring their Household Hazardous Waste to a depot.

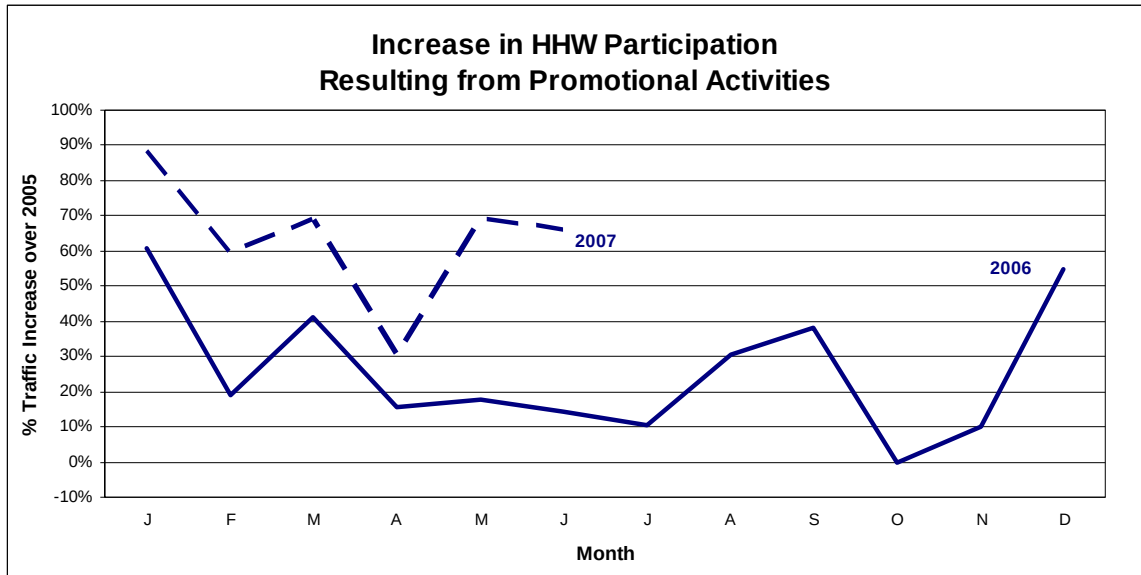
Media included:

- Five weeks of advertising in the *Era Banner*, *Richmond Hill Liberal* and the *Toronto Star*.
- Updated Household Hazardous Waste brochure: created and mailed to 28 real estate agents for distribution to their clients; and distributed by Branch staff at various public outreach events.
- Paint can information tags: distributed to 16 paint retailers to attach to paint cans at point of sale informing residents about HHW and its proper disposal.
- Thirty second commercial on the *Rogers TV Listings Channel* from February 1 to March 28.

The ongoing support of the Household Hazardous Waste program has witnessed some significant successes (see Chart 2). Overall traffic increased by over 12% from 2005 to 2006 (excluding Vaughan's numbers since this depot only opened in May 2005). With Vaughan included, there was approximately a 22% increase in traffic at the sites. For the

first part of 2007 (January to June), the depots have experienced a traffic increase of over 30% compared with 2006.

Chart 2



4.4.3 Promotion and Education Awards

York Region's Waste Management Branch has received two awards thus far this year. Both awards recognize the 2006 Household Hazardous Waste campaign.

Branch staff was awarded *Best Promotional Campaign* by the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators (AMRC) at its Provincial Promotion and Education Awards in February, 2007. The AMRC received 63 entries across seven categories. This is the most entries they have ever received for these awards.

Branch staff has also been informed that they have received the *Gold Communications Award* by the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA). This will be presented to York Region in October of 2007 at SWANA's Communication, Education and Marketing Awards. SWANA has three categories for their awards and this year they received 20 submittals, the highest number of submittals received to date.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Table 1 outlines the promotional and material costs associated with the 2007 events and campaigns discussed, excluding staff time.

Table 1
Total Cost for 2007 Events and Campaigns

Event	Details	Cost (\$)
Earth Week	Aurora Home Show / Litter Roundup	800
Compost Awareness Week	Composter Sale and Seminars	20,000
Public Works Week	Open House / Public Event	15,000
Canadian Environment Week	Mount Albert Sports Day / Windfall Ecology Festival	2,000
Re-Use Events	Advertising	28,000
Waste Reduction Week	Promotion and Materials	20,000
N6 Green Bin	Funding to Local Municipalities	50,000
Durham/York Residual	Advertising	100,000
Waste EA Study		
Blue Box Promotion	Advertising	38,000
HHW Campaign	Advertising	67,000
Total Cost		\$348,000

The above mentioned investment for special events and advertising reinforces promotional efforts made by the local municipalities. The Region's 2006 diversion rate was 40% and is expected to reach 50% for 2007. This rate has more than doubled since 2004, an increase attributable to the implementation of the Source Separated Organics program, increased collection frequencies and effective education and promotion.

The Branch has been running public events and waste management campaigns since 2004. Year over year increases in diverted tonnage have been seen in all programs over this time. Yard waste and blue box diversion increased 17% and 19%, respectively between 2005 and 2006 and similar increases are expected for 2007. Residual waste tonnage decreased 8% in 2006, and overall waste generation increased by only 4% during the same period.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Region works closely with the local municipalities in developing events and activities where there is a shared interest, such as the launch of the Green Bin program. The continued promotion of waste management programs and initiatives will support and complement the promotional efforts made by the local municipalities, reinforcing the waste management messages delivered to residents.

7. CONCLUSION

Advertising campaigns and public outreach events are planned throughout the year to raise awareness about the waste management programs and initiatives. The purpose is to

inform residents about waste management and how to properly implement the programs within their households. This educational initiative has resulted in higher capture rates of recyclables, increasing Blue Box revenue; reduced tonnage of residual waste requiring disposal; increased depot usage by residents; and less contamination at the Region's facilities, improving efficiencies in operation, and reducing the risk of surcharges and rejected loads by contractors. Public response to the Branch's communication efforts has been positive and with an increase in waste diversion seen each year.

For more information on this report contact Leslie Gilbert, Promotion and Education Coordinator of the Solid Waste and Administration Branch at extension 5786 in the Transportation and Works Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.