

## **Best Practices/Restoration Project Reports Washing Machine Cash Incentive Program**

### **Description**

The *Washing Machine Cash Incentive Program* is one of several city initiatives to reduce water use citywide by 15 percent by 2011. Changing attitudes and behaviour toward high efficiency washing machines will help the City toward this goal as these machines typically use 40 percent less water and 60 percent less energy. The City increases awareness of high efficiency washing machines to residents by promoting a \$60 rebate in retail stores at point-of-purchase and promoting the program using advertisements, mall displays, tradeshow, the web and water bill inserts. The City offers up to a \$125 to owners and property managers in the commercial sector who buy eligible washing machines. Recently, Enbridge Gas partnered with the City and provides an additional \$75 rebate to its commercial gas customers who buy eligible washing machines. The Washing Machine Cash Incentive Program was officially launched to Toronto residents in late 2003. Advertisements and promotional activities cost approximately \$40,000.

### **Background**

Toronto's population is expected to increase by one quarter of a million people in six years. The population growth poses a potential challenge for the City of Toronto's existing water infrastructure. Currently, the system provides sufficient water for its present population and it was designed with additional capacity to meet the needs of a larger population in the future. However, current water demand is higher than initial estimates, especially during the summer when residents water lawns, fill pools, and wash driveways. At this rate, the City estimates that it must begin expanding its water systems (includes water filtration plants, wastewater treatment plants, and new water mains) to accommodate its growing population.

Expanding the water system is an extremely expensive venture and could potentially cost \$220 million. Research shows that a system expansion could be avoided if the "average daily" and "peak day" (the one day in the year when water use is highest) demands were reduced by 15 percent by 2011. Toronto's water system was built to accommodate the "peak day" demand.

In 2002, Toronto Council adopted a *Water Efficiency Plan* to help with water demand management across the city. The plan identifies initiatives that would help the City to reduce the water demand of its existing population and defer or reduce the capital costs associated with constructing or expanding water and wastewater infrastructure.

Implementing the water reducing initiatives outlined in the plan is more cost effective at an estimated cost of \$74 million compared to an estimated \$220 million to expand the existing system.

The objectives of the Washing Machine Incentive Program are to help avoid costly expansion of water and wastewater facilities by generating interest and understanding of the city's goals to reduce water use by:

- promoting the benefits of the water-efficient washing machine,
- motivating residents to purchase water-efficient washing machines

- promoting the rebate offer and benefits of water-efficient washing machines at point-of-purchase

### *Strategies*

- Promote the rebate offer at point-of-purchase, highlighting the benefits of water-efficient washing machines and the City's plans to reduce water use.
- Develop relationships with marketing staff, retail sales staff and wholesale distributors to help promote the rebate program and benefits of water-efficient washing machines directly to consumers.
- Improve relations with property owners of multi-unit residential or ICI properties in the City by providing information that would help them to manage water costs, increase efficiency, and plan for projects that could impact their business.
- Develop partnerships with provincial government and retail stores to maximize promotions and take advantage of additional rebates.
- Tie all the water-efficient initiatives into one umbrella theme – *WaterSaver* – which readily identifies ways to reduce water use and receive rebates.

### *Barriers Include*

- Most of the washing machines that are qualified for rebates are front-loading washing machines. While these washers are substantially more water- and energy-efficient, they are more expensive than conventional washing machines.
- The city is offering a \$60 rebate for the purchase of an eligible washing machine. This is not a significant contribution to a washing machine that costs from \$800 to \$2000.

### Results

- The City of Toronto issued more than 5,000 washing machine rebates exceeding its goal of 4,300 rebates.
- Sales of water-efficient washing machines in Ontario increased in 2004. Washing machine manufacturers are reluctant to confirm the percentage increase but confirm that 60 percent of the sales of front-loading washing machines are in the Greater Toronto Area
- Anecdotally, the retail sales staff says more customers are inquiring about water-efficient washing machines.
- This program and other water efficiency initiatives helped the city to reduce water use city-wide by six percent, achieving its overall goal for 2004.
- The number of people visiting the city's web site that is designated to the Water division increased from 370,000 visits in 2003 to 450,000 visits in 2004. The most active pages were those containing information about the water efficiency initiatives.

Pictures (see attached)

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Is this what they mean by money laundering?

Introducing the Wash 'n' Save program. Buy a new City-selected water-efficient washing machine and we'll give you \$60 cash back. These machines use nearly half the water and energy of conventional top-loaders, and are gentler on clothes too. Download the application form at [www.toronto.ca/water](http://www.toronto.ca/water) or call 416-392-7000, and while you're at it, check out our rebate program for low-flush toilets as well. Help ease demand on the City's water and wastewater systems.

Wash 'n' Save 

2003/2004 “Washing Machine Rebate” print campaign” – design magazines and community papers

*Stuck*  
in the past with a

**CONVENTIONAL**

*washing MACHINE?*

Buy a front-loading washing machine and see how much money today's technology can save you. You'll use nearly half the water, energy and detergent, and get a \$60 rebate in the bargain. Once you've bought yours, apply for a rebate at [toronto.ca/water](http://toronto.ca/water) and you'll be **automatically entered in a draw to win back the full cost of the machine.**

 

Program open to Toronto residents only. Not all washing machines are eligible. For details visit [www.toronto.ca/water](http://www.toronto.ca/water).

2005 “Washing Machine Rebate” print campaign – design magazines, multi-ethnic papers and community newspapers

# WaterSaver



*Buy this washing machine  
and you qualify for  
\$60 cash back from the  
City of Toronto.*

*Only Toronto residents are eligible to participate.  
Ask the sales associate for details.*

**\$60**  
cash back plus  
a draw to win up to  
**\$2500**

 **TORONTO**Water