AFFORDABLE ENERGY PROGRAM MARKETING PLAN

1 BACKGROUND

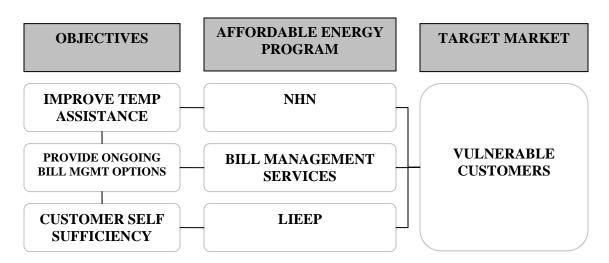
1.1 Bill Assistance Program Enhancement

Manitoba Hydro is consolidating and enhancing its three main bill assistance program components under one umbrella program called the Affordable Energy Program (AEP). Current programming is comprehensive, and will only become more effective as a result of these enhancements. Recently, the LIEEP has been identified as a leader in the country for lower income energy efficiency programs.

Through this consolidation, all program components that target lower income households will work together to create customized solutions to aid program participants in managing their bills and reducing their energy burdens.

The overall objective for the enhanced AEP is to improve the affordability of energy for lower income customers while maintaining efficient operations of Manitoba Hydro. To that end, an enhanced marketing plan has been developed to promote the AEP and ensure qualified customers are aware and can easily participate in the program, as described in Section 2.

Below is a table outlining the three key components of the AEP and the program objectives they are designed to satisfy. Neighbours Helping Neighbours (NHN) will focus on providing temporary financial assistance, as well as reducing outstanding arrears. Bill Management Services will focus on providing customers with tools to help them better manage their energy bills such as equal payment plans and pick your payment date options. The Lower Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP) will anchor the overall AEP offering sustainable solutions to help customers move towards self sufficiency through energy efficiency upgrades which will reduce their energy bills.



Manitoba Hydro has a strong history of collaborating with various government, social and commmunity organizations including the Salvation Army which is responsible for operating the NHN program. Manitoba Hydro currently refers a large number of customers to various program partners to seek aid that falls outside Manitoba Hydro's scope of assistance. The AEP team has identified the opportunity to gain valuable referrals from its program partners by actively and reciprocally encouraging them to include the AEP as part of their toolkit used in assisting their clients facing financial hardship. Manitoba Hydro believes that increasing two-way communication between the AEP team and the program partners will help to further solidify the AEP as a key element of a broad social services portfolio. Research of other jurisdictional programming illustrates that this holistic approach to customer aid is more effective at creating sustainable change in customers' financial situations that would not be possible without the cooperation of multiple parties.

1.2 Existing Marketing

A key area of the program that is being enhanced is the marketing plan. Manitoba Hydro currently uses community newsletters and magazines, bill inserts, corporate website, targeted mail drops, and public service announcements. In addition, the program is currently promoted through Manitoba Hydro customer service staff and other community groups and stakeholders. This marketing approach has generated over 1 700 customer applications since the start of the program. In order to increase the participation, consultations have taken place with other lower income programs and stakeholders. The findings of this research are presented in Section 1.3 of this report.

1.3 Existing Research

a) Demographics

i. Manitoba Hydro Residential Survey

Manitoba Hydro uses 125% of the federal government Low Income Cut Off (LICO) to define the lower income customer base. The following information summarizes the current demographic data on lower income households in Manitoba. Approximately 93 000 customers are directly paying their own utility bills and are within the LICO x 125% threshold, with approximately 70% owning their dwelling.

LICO x 125% DWELLING TYPES												
	OWN	RENT	TOTAL									
Single	54 426	5 696	60 122									
Multiplex	4 705	3 001	7 706									
Townhouse	1 510	3 067	4 577									
Mobile	2 993	507	3 500									
Subtotal (Net Apartments)	63 634	12 271	75 905									
Apartment	2 145	15 147	17 292									
Total	65 779	27 418	93 197									
Total %	71%	29%	100%									

It is important to note that the demographic information listed above is based on information collected in 2003. This information will be updated early in 2010 pending the results of the 2009 Manitoba Hydro Residential Customer Survey. The updated information is not expected to affect the overall direction of the strategy outlined in this plan, but will be reviewed and applied as necessary.

ii. Statistics Canada

The City of Winnipeg, in partnership with local community organizations, other levels of government and the Community Social Data Strategy group, matched 2006 Statistics Canada Census Data to Winnipeg neighbourhood geographic areas. Aggregate household income data by neighbourhood was analyzed and was used to identify areas in which to target communications within the City of Winnipeg.

b) Key Learnings from other Utilities & Stakeholders

Manitoba Hydro has been invited to present its Lower Income Energy Efficiency Program at various Canadian and United States lower income energy efficiency conferences, including Chartwell's Best Practices Summit on Serving Low Income Customers in April 2009 and Chartwell's Webinar on Low-Income Energy Efficiency Programs in December 2009. As a result, Manitoba Hydro has been able to gain learnings from other presenting utilities that have been delivering lower income programs for many years. A prime example is San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) that started its lower income energy efficiency program in the 1980's. Its program has grown substantially since its inception with it serving over 20 000 lower income customers a bundled offering of services in 2009. Another example is Entergy, a utility that was able to help over 17 000 customers through its Power To Care fund in 2008. Discussions have also taken place with Chartwell, an independent information services company that facilitates knowledge exchange among utility professionals. Consultations with their researchers have emphasised

the importance of building upon Manitoba Hydro's existing bill assistance structure and slowly ramping up initiatives and promotion as experience is gained. It should be noted that the organizations listed above are just a small sample of the numerous entities Manitoba Hydro has been working with to further refine its program and marketing efforts.

Below is a set of barriers to participation and marketing tactics that were identified during the research process.

Barriers to Participation

The barriers to participation listed below are addressed by the marketing strategy outlined later on in this plan:

- i. Confusion & Lack of program understanding Bill Assistance programs can often be complex with multiple offerings which can lead to customers having difficulty understanding which program to utilize and/or how it can help them reduce their energy bills.
- ii. Lack of Trust Due to the intrusive nature of some bill assistance programs, specifically those that involve home visits, customers are occasionally hesitant to participate as they do not trust strangers to come into their homes. A common example would be an energy audit. In addition, customers may be sceptical of "free" energy upgrades, and may be less sceptical if they heard this message delivered by a community group, which is a trusted source.
- iii. Not a priority, set aside and later forgotten Lower income customers face numerous challenges on a daily basis, and energy efficiency and reducing energy bills is not always top priority. As a result, the marketing message must be relevant and motivational to lead customers to act upon it quickly, or risk that it will be forgotten.
- iv. Ineffective Messaging Marketing messages and the mediums that are used to communicate messages must be carefully selected to ensure they appeal to the target audience.

Marketing Tactics

Below is a list of marketing tactics that are commonly used by utilities to promote their bill assistance offerings, some of which are already in use by Manitoba Hydro. Those not currently in use have been reviewed, and where applicable, have been incorporated into the marketing strategy laid out later on in the report.

- i. Direct mail, Bill Messaging, Email Campaign, Automated Outbound Calling
 - o Allows for targeted messaging to specific customer groups
 - o Offers one of the highest response rates of all mediums
 - Used by Dominion Virginia Power, San Diego Gas & Electric, Entergy, Pacific Gas & Electric, TXU Energy

ii. Program Partners/Social Networks

- o Use newsletters, seminars, meetings, and leadership summits to build relationships with partners
- Provide unique training opportunities to educate them on the lower income programs
- o Partners include social agencies, community leaders, etc.
- Used by Entergy, San Diego Gas & Electric, NV Energy, Pacific Gas & Electric, Public Service Enterprise Group

iii. Neighbourhood Approach/Targeted Canvassing

- o Targeted message and delivery channel for specific customer segments
- Used by San Diego Gas & Electric

iv. Internal marketing campaign

- o Elicit employee "buy in" to programming in an effort to improve program delivery
- o Used by Entergy, Public Service Enterprise Group, Clark Public Utilities

v. Internet/Electronic Marketing (Text, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

- o Using emerging communication forms to deliver program marketing messages
- Used by San Diego Gas & Electric

vi. Annual low income report

- o Tool used for disseminating program results on an annual basis that works well for internal and external marketing, not necessarily for program participants, but for program partners and internal/external stakeholders
- Used by Entergy

vii. Community Events/Public Relations Activities

- o Hold events for communities where residents are invited to learn about the lower income programming.
- Used by Pacific Gas & Electric

2 MARKETING OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY

It is critical to build awareness of the comprehensive Affordable Energy Program through a solid marketing strategy. Manitoba Hydro must expand its understanding of the motivators and barriers within the lower income market segment, and promote the program in a way that will minimize barriers and maximize participation. Below is a summary of the marketing strategy including the steps that will be taken to implement it.

2.1 Objective

The marketing objective of the Affordable Energy Program is to increase awareness and participation in Manitoba Hydro's enhanced and comprehensive Affordable Energy Program resulting in reduced energy burdens for lower income Manitobans.

2.2 Target Market

The overall target market for Manitoba Hydro's Affordable Energy Program is lower income households, particularly those that are struggling with managing their energy bills. The target market becomes more narrow at the point where emergency assistance is required through the NHN program, where more specific criteria is used to indentify vulnerable customers in genuine need.

This target market faces key barriers related to participation in lower income programs, specifically a general lack of awareness of energy conservation and bill management options. As mentioned earlier in the Key Learnings section, additional research has revealed more barriers including lack of program understanding, security fears related to energy audits, program participation not being made a priority by the individual and then later forgotten, and ineffective messaging.

2.3 Marketing Strategy

The marketing strategy for the Affordable Energy Program is to create a simple yet compelling umbrella education and communication program that positions the "Affordable Energy Program" as an easy way for Manitobans to save energy and manage their utility bills. The common bond between all program communications will be the elements of reliability and trust, which will be communicated by personalizing the "Affordable Energy Program" as caring, considerate, approachable, friendly and knowledgeable. Under this umbrella, targeted messaging will be developed to address the needs of individual market segments.

2.4 Marketing Research

Both quantitative and qualitative research will assist in developing communications that provide compelling messaging to appropriate market segments as follows.

a) Updated Demographic Study

Manitoba Hydro is currently completing the 2009 Residential Customer Survey. This survey has been designed to provide detailed information on the number of lower income consumers, family size, income levels, types of heating equipment, types of housing, target market geographical information, and any relationship that may exist between income and consumption. Completion of the survey as well as the tabulation and review of the results is expected early in 2010.

b) Qualitative Pre-testing of Messaging and Materials

Focus group testing will be performed to provide feedback on messaging and potential market acceptance of the advertising materials. Lower income participants will be shown different versions of advertising materials, and will be probed to determine the most relevant, understandable and motivating messages. As this is still a relatively new target market for Manitoba Hydro, it is important to ensure that the messages and "look and feel" of the campaign materials are compelling and address any communication barriers presented by this "hard to reach" group. In the absence of focus groups, there is the potential for a substantive media investment to be placed behind a message that is either not understood, believable, trusted, or motivating, resulting in a poor response to the campaign.

Benefits/strengths of group discussions include data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group setting, as listening to others' verbalized experiences stimulates memories, ideas, and experiences in participants. Probing on an issue of interest when group members engage can result in an increased elaboration on a topic and broader insight into understanding an issue.

c) Quantitative Monitoring of Program Awareness through Omnibus Study

Equally important to pre-testing the marketing materials through focus groups is continuously monitoring the response of the campaign. It is critical to continuously measure the breakthrough of the media campaign to ensure the target group is aware of the advertising and main message is being conveyed. In addition, the impact of the advertising can be tracked to determine whether the creative is motivating to the target group, thus providing an indication as to whether the target group may respond to the advertising by participating in the AEP and potentially identifying the barriers to participation. This would be achieved by asking four to five questions on an omnibus survey every four to six months during the first year of the campaign, with a baseline survey performed prior to the campaign being launched.

An omnibus survey is a quantitative survey that interviews a large and representative sample of people with a view to find the results to represent the whole population. It allows clients to share the costs of research by pooling questions. All the questions for a given wave are then put to a representative sample as part of a single questionnaire. Each individual client's questions are of course confidential, and results are processed in such a way as to ensure that each party only sees their own data. An omnibus survey is conducted on a set timetable, and takes place regularly throughout the year - typically on a monthly basis.

d) Ongoing Research

Throughout the life of the program, ongoing evaluation will be performed through a number of metrics as outlined in Section 4 of this plan. Information will be gleaned from these metrics to continuously evolve the marketing plan. Manitoba Hydro will also work closely with program partners such as the Social Planning Council to get their feedback on the marketing strategy and incorporate it into future initiatives.

2.5 Marketing Tactics

A two pronged marketing approach that focuses on education and communication will be used to achieve the objective of increased awareness and participation in the AEP. Tactics in both areas will support the comprehensive and holistic nature of the AEP and leverage working with program partners to extend the reach of the campaign across all communities in Manitoba.

a) Education

Education will be a valuable component of the Affordable Energy Program, not just education of the customer, but also education of the service providers and program partners. Other successful programs such as Entergy's Lower Income Program have shown that energy efficiency programs increase energy savings and enhance the persistence of savings by providing customer education and training to staff. Education also helps the customer feel more committed to the program and gives the customer a degree of control over their energy usage and related savings.

The following marketing activities will be introduced into the Affordable Energy Program:

i. Develop a team of "Affordable Energy Champions"

A team of "Affordable Energy Champions" comprised of key staff within Manitoba Hydro and program partners will be developed. The team will be trained on the key components of the program through a "train the trainer" model. Through this network, opportunities for community educational workshops will be identified where information can be disseminated.

ii. Develop supporting customer educational materials

Supporting materials will be developed to promote the program offerings and encourage energy efficient behaviour. An example would be a "leave behind" document left with a participating homeowner that explains the importance of energy efficient behaviours such as turning off the lights when leaving the room or lowering the thermostat when leaving the home for an extended period of time.

iii. Develop an educational component related to renting

An educational component specifically targeted to lower income tenants/owners who pay their own utility bills, similar to the "before you rent" campaign in Quebec will be developed to help customers avoid renting accommodations with energy bills that do not fit their budget.

iv. Investigate tenant/owner led neighbourhood education programs

Consultations with community groups will take place to determine other educational opportunities specific to lower income neighbourhoods where tenant/owner led neighbourhood "Affordable Energy Action Plans" may be developed, similar to tenant led community animation models that have been developed in Ontario.

b) Communication

i. Enhance Manitoba Hydro Communications: Increased awareness of the Affordable Energy Program will be achieved through the following communication vehicles:

Mass Media:

- A layered mass media approach will be used to communicate the Affordable Energy Program offering to the lower income market, with special focus on using media vehicles that can reach the target group. This includes bus benches (Feb-May, Aug-Nov) and public recycling bins (May-Aug) in an attempt to provide top of mind awareness of the AEP. Direct mail (Feb-May, Aug-Oct), radio (Feb-June, Aug-Oct), and select community newspapers (Feb-Apr, Aug-Oct) will be used to reinforce the message and provide a "call to action" where targeted customers will contact Manitoba Hydro to inquire into the program.
- Supporting promotional materials will consist of bill inserts, Manitoba Hydro website, and messages heard while "on hold" when calling the Manitoba Hydro customer service line.
- Targeted activities in partnership with communities may include promotional brochure drops and presentations will take place in communities/areas with high penetration of lower income households.

- Outbound calls to targeted customers.
- Note: A media calendar is included in Appendix A. A media development calendar is included in Appendix B.

Manitoba Hydro Staff:

As indicated earlier, a team of "Affordable Energy Champions" will be developed within Manitoba Hydro which will consist of representatives from all departments which interact with lower income customers including: Bill Management Services, Call Centre, District Offices, and the Affordable Energy Unit. Additional training will be provided for these key staff members, who in turn, will train staff within each department to ensure the program offerings are communicated to all customers at all relevant opportunities.

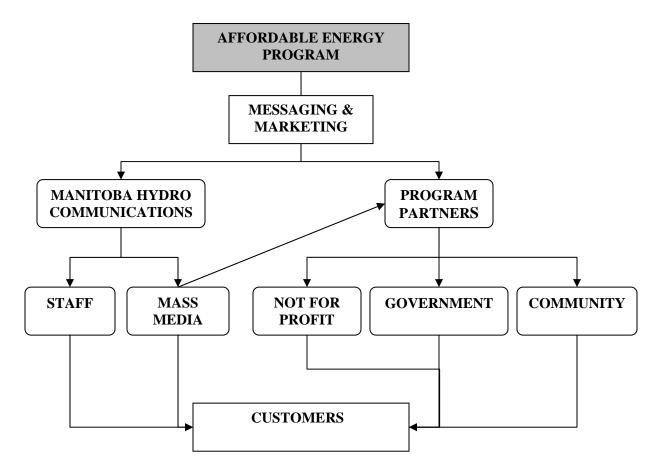
ii. Strengthen marketing support from program partners:

- The use of trusted sources in the community is common amongst other jurisdictional lower income programming and has been affirmed as an important strategy by stakeholders to deliver messages to lower income customers. Therefore, in addition to targeting the lower income customer, it will also be important to increase the awareness of the Affordable Energy Program to potential program partners who can promote the program through direct customer contact, community events, etc. Manitoba Hydro will also attend lower income conferences, seminars and events throughout the province to promote the program to other stakeholders. The objective will be to broaden the team of "Affordable Energy Champions" to include external stakeholders that can act as ambassadors to promote the program, and provide constant reinforcement of bill management and energy efficiency behaviours. Program partners will disseminate AEP promotional materials to their clients and provide specific offerings tailored to meet their clients' needs.
- o Program partners will include, and not be limited to the following:
 - Not for profit groups (NGO's) such as Habitat for Humanity, Winnipeg Harvest, Winnipeg Foundation, United Way, and Salvation Army will be instrumental in promoting the program to lower income Manitobans with whom they already interface.
 - Government services such as the Province of Manitoba Public Trustee, Winnipeg Housing & Homelessness Initiative, and Manitoba Housing Authority.
 - Community groups such as the Westminster Housing Society, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council Housing Authority, and the North End Housing Project.

 Private Sector corporations and retailers, such as Giant Tiger, that service lower income customers will also be approached to distribute supporting materials, such as brochures and posters, to their customers.

Note: The AEP's program partners are constantly evolving and the AEP team is eager to grow the number of partners associated with the program.

The chart below illustrates the communication path of the Educational and Awareness messages delivered through various tactics flowing down to the customer.



3 BUDGET

Estimated Lower Income Budget Proposal*

	2009-2010	2010-2011	Total
Research			
Pre-Program Focus Groups	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
Customer Satisfaction Tracking Study**	\$0	\$0	\$0
OmniBus	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000
Total	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$25,000
Creative Development & Production	\$11,950	\$10,900	\$22,850
Creative Development & Froduction	φ11,950	Ψ10,900	ΨΖΖ,030
Media			
Bus Benches / Transit Shelters	\$900	\$9,900	\$10,800
Recycling Bins (Silver Boxes)	\$0	\$6,180	\$6,180
NCI Radio	\$1,000	\$4,500	\$5,500
CKJS Ethnic Radio	\$1,000	\$4,500	\$5,500
City targeted newspaper/magazine	\$2,500	\$10,000	\$12,500
MCNA Rural (select markets)	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$30,000
Power Smart**	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$10,400	\$60,080	\$70,480
Direct Marketing			
Canvassing	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Phone Calls (outbound)	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Community Intiatives	\$1,000	\$4,000	\$5,000
Direct Mail	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$60,000
Total	\$11,000	\$69,000	\$80,000
OVERALL TOTAL	\$48,350	\$149,980	\$198,330
		-	-

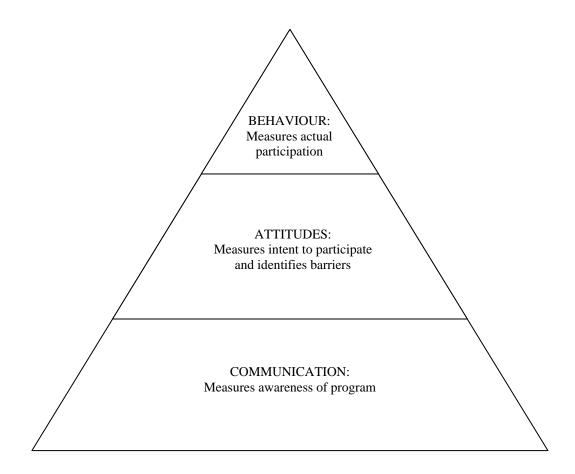
^{*} Subject to change based on media availability and cost of proposed activities

^{**} No cost to Affordable Energy Program

4 MARKETING EVALUATION

The following pyramid provides a high level overview of the components of the evaluation of the AEP marketing program. The evaluation begins with measuring against the goal of increasing the awareness of the AEP to the entire target market, then builds up to the to the ultimate goal of increasing their participation in the program, as described below.

- The first level measures the awareness of the program. Customers will be asked if they are aware of the program, and if so, asked where they heard about the AEP.
- The second level measures the intent of the target group to participate in the program, and asks those that are aware of the program if they intend to participate. If customers do not intend to participate, they are asked about their barriers to participation which will provide insight into their attitudes about the program.
- The third level measures the actual behavioural changes that result from the marketing, which is measured through the actual participation of the target group.



5 CONCLUSION

Manitoba Hydro is enhancing and consolidating the design, delivery and marketing of its current bill assistance and Lower Income Energy Efficiency Program under one comprehensive program called the Affordable Energy Program. Current programming is comprehensive, and will only become more effective through these enhancements. Recently, the LIEEP has been identified as a leader in the country for lower income energy efficiency programs. In addition, approximately 1 700 applications have been received for the LIEEP program which were generated through past promotional activity such as bill inserts, advertisements in targeted magazines, targeted mail drops and very importantly, through partnerships with community groups and other stakeholders.

Based on extensive consultations held with these stakeholders and utilities in other jurisdictions, key learnings have been incorporated into an enhanced umbrella marketing plan that that will position the Affordable Energy Program as an easy way for lower income Manitobans to save energy and manage their utility bills. Enhanced marketing tactics focusing on education and communication will be supported through a media campaign that targets lower income households, community groups and other program partners. Ongoing research will be performed to ensure the messaging is relevant and motivating to the target group. Through this consolidation of programming, enhanced marketing strategy, and continuous evaluation, Manitoba Hydro will continue to evolve the Affordable Energy Program to improve accessibility and program awareness, ultimately leading to reducing the energy burden of Manitoba Hydro's lower income customers.

APPENDIX A

MEDIA CALENDAR

Media
Bus Benches / Transit Shelters Recycling Bins (Silver Boxes) Direct Mail NCI Radio CKJS Ethnic Radio City targeted newspaper/magazine MCNA Rural (select markets) Radio - Power Smart Campaign

Production

Bus Benches Recycling Bins (Silver Boxes) Direct Mail Radio Newspaper

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC		
QTY	COST														% of media
15	\$ 1,800.00		-	1 - 2 wks	4 wks	2 - 3 wks		-	4 wks	4 wks	4 wks	4 wks	-	\$ 10,800.00	7%
15	\$ 1,545.00		-	-		4 wks	4 wks	4 wks	4 wks					\$ 6,180.00	4%
25,000	\$ 10,000.00		-	x	X	х		-	х	х	х			\$ 60,000.00	40%
30	\$ 500.00		-	1 - 2 wks	2 wks	1 - 2 wks		-	2 wks	2 wks	2 wks		-	\$ 5,500.00	4%
30	\$ 500.00		-	1 - 2 wks	2 wks	1 - 2 wks		-	2 wks	2 wks	2 wks		-	\$ 5,500.00	4%
TBD	\$ 2,500.00		-	х	х	-		-	х	х	х			\$ 12,500.00	8%
TBD	\$ 5,000.00		-	x	x	х		-	х	х	х			\$ 30,000.00	20%
2	\$0		-	-		х	х	-		-				\$ -	0%
	•		•	•		•		•		•				\$ 130,480.00	

15	1	-	-	\$ 1,200.00	-	-	-	\$ 1,200.00		-	-	-	\$ 2,400.00	2%
15		-	-	-	\$ 1,200.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 1,200.00	1%
25,000	1	-	-	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	-	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	-	\$ 8,000.00	5%
30 sec		-	-	\$ 3,000.00	-	-	-	\$ 3,000.00	-	-	-	-	\$ 6,000.00	4%
TBD	-	-	-	\$ 250.00	-	-		-			-	-	\$ 250.00	0%
													\$ 17,850.00	

TOTAL \$ 148,330.00

^{*} Media Calendar contains high level estimates that are subject to change

DEC

\$ 10,000.00 \$ -\$ 15,000.00

\$ 5,000.00 \$ 10,000.00 \$ 5,000.00

NOV

TBD

OCT

TBD

APPENDIX B

APR

TBD

MAY

TBD

DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

JUL

TBD

AUG

TBD

SEP

TBD

JUN

<u>Research</u>													
Pre-Program Focus Groups	1	\$ 10,000.00	-	х	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Γ
Customer Satisfaction Tracking Study		\$ -	-	-		-	-	-		х	-	-	Ē
OmniBus	3	\$ 5,000.00	-	-	х	-	-	х		-	х	-	I
Direct Marketing													
Canvassing	2/year	\$ 2,500.00	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	х	Ē
Phone Calls (call centre)	2/vear	\$ 5,000,00			-	-	x	-		-	-	x	Γ

MAR

TBD

FEB

Community Initiatives

Manitoba Hydro Communications

Hydro Gram Energy Matters Website Bill Insert Please Hold Canada

	\$ -	-	-	х	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ -
	\$ -	-	-	-	х	-	-	-	х	-	-	-		\$ -
	\$ -	-	х	х	х	х	x	х	х	х	х	х	х	\$ -
	\$ -	-	-	-	х	-	-	-	-	х	-	-		\$ -
	\$ -	-	-	-	-	х	x	х	х	х	х	-	-	\$ -
1	\$ 5,000.00	-	х	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 5,000.00

TBD

JAN

COST

\$ 5,000.00

QTY

TOTAL \$ 50,000.00

^{*} Development Calendar contains high level estimates that are subject to change