City of Leduc Waste Diversion Social Marketing Strategy

Statement of Intent
This social marketing strategy includes the development and implementation of a multi-level communications strategy to disseminate information to residents so they will increase their participation in waste diversion initiatives over the short term and change their behaviours over the longer term so the concepts of recycling and waste reduction become routine habits for them.

Executive Summary
In February 2012, the City of Leduc approved a target of 65% residential waste diversion by 2021. To achieve this goal, the City needed to increase residential recycling, get residents to participate in a household organics pickup program and increase their use of depot drop-off facilities. A waste diversion social marketing strategy was developed and implemented by late summer 2012 to maximize participation. The multi-layered strategy used the results of research to identify key audiences, then to develop communication tools preferred by our audiences. The strategy first raised audience awareness and then increased participation using tools from a detailed brochure and a “fun” sorting wheel to a phone app, face tattoos and social marketing. The campaign met all its objectives, including awareness goals, the effectiveness of communication tools and the amount of waste diverted from the landfill.

Research / Planning
The need for a social marketing strategy
The City of Leduc, population 27,240, is located about 25 miles south of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Leduc is a family-oriented city, with traditional values. Residents prefer the less-hectic pace of a smaller city and value their amenities and way of life.

Similar to many other municipal leaders, the Leduc City Council, supported by its residents, is increasing its focus toward responsible environmental stewardship. In February 2012, following significant public input, the City of Leduc approved its 10-year Environmental Plan. Increased waste reduction emerged as a top priority. The target of 65% residential waste diversion from the landfill by 2021 was set, meaning a 45% increase in diversion levels. Best practice research from similar municipalities showed this could be achieved with sorting household and garden organics out of the waste stream.

To meet this need within a similar utility cost, the City recognized it needed a different collection approach and a simple program residents could easily participate in.

Before the social marketing strategy was begun, 7,000 households received curbside waste and blue bag recyclables collection. In addition, residents could drop off blue bag recyclable materials (mixed paper, cardboard, tin / aluminum cans and plates, non-glass drink containers and plastic containers with the recycling logo) at a small recycling depot and take their plant and garden material as well as small tree branches to a compost station. All other materials were considered waste.

Public information materials to support residents’ recycling and waste diversion efforts were very limited before the new program was introduced. Basic information was included on the City of Leduc website, and occasional print advertising was used to raise public awareness around significant events such as schedule changes.

The City re-tendered collection services and approved a new, automated cart collection service for both waste and organics. This new curbside collection program was to start mid-September 2012. In
addition, the recycling station was expanded to collect more products - household hazardous waste and electronic waste.

The social marketing challenge was to support the implementation of this long-term plan and foster the development of a community norm that embraces the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) as a stronger part of Leduc life and ensure residents had the information they needed to fully participate in the programs. The City contracted The DAGNY Partnership (TDP), marketing and communications consultants, to develop the communications strategy and lead its implementation.

**Research and analysis**
Between April and June 2012, TDP made a comprehensive study of available materials to assess Leduc residents' attitudes and awareness toward the environment generally and waste diversion specifically. The materials review included community input for the Environmental Plan, two citizen satisfaction surveys, a business case for waste reduction (budget year 2012), the Residential Solid Waste Management Study, Advanced Environmental Engineering, and pertinent City Council reports. As well, TDP analyzed newspaper and social media coverage to gauge resident attitudes and awareness, conducted a thorough web scan for national best practices especially for communicating organic collection.

Specific to the Leduc region, TDP conducted one-on-one interviews with community stakeholders/partners including the school districts and the public library. One-on-one interviews were also held with representatives of neighbouring communities that had implemented very similar organics collection programs. The consultants reviewed materials from several others in the region with very similar programs. TDP also held stakeholder workshops with the Leduc Environmental Advisory Committee (LEAB) and Leduc City Council, both keen to have the initiatives undertaken and targets met, and gathered input from key staff and contractors from the City's environmental operations and communications departments.

Earlier public consultation related to the Environmental Plan showed a solid foundation of supportive attitudes and behaviours toward keeping their community clean, green and attractive, and enhancing waste reduction efforts – but not at increased cost.

**Target audience analysis**
All households that had been receiving curbside waste and blue bag recycling pickup were invited to participate in the new curbside organics program. The entire community, including those living in multi-family units, would be encouraged to use the enhanced depot drop-off services.

Leduc's most recent census shows an average age of 35. The city's largest population sector is the 25–35 year age group, those most likely to include young families. The family nature of Leduc is further illustrated with 8% of the population being under the age of 4. Young families are an important audience because they can generate larger volumes of waste – including disposable diapers that cannot be diverted from the landfill.

The 55+ age group is relatively stable with only slight increases in the 60–65 and 85+ age groups. The exception are women aged 75+; if they live in their own homes, they may have special needs relating to the size and ease of moving large carts.

Household size varies from an average of 1.8 to 3.3 people per household. In general, about a quarter of the population lives in the city’s core, 32% in newer neighbourhoods and 42% in established neighbourhoods. Approximately 45% of households earn between $50,000 and $100,000 annually, and 43% earn more than $100,000 annually. Some of the newer neighbourhoods contain “keyhole” streets, or cul-de-sacs, where the tight curb space challenges residents to leave sufficient space between their carts and also challenges the collection crews to safely manoeuvre their trucks.

What do Leduc residents think about their environment and waste reduction? The 2010 Citizen
Satisfaction Survey illustrated that waste collection ranked as higher-than-average importance and higher-than-average customer satisfaction. The 2012 Citizen Satisfaction Survey concluded about 90% of residents are somewhat or very familiar with the City’s environmental initiatives, and 76% indicate high (4 or 5 out of 5) levels of satisfaction with the initiatives. Another survey probed residents’ willingness to pay more for organics collection; only 26% were willing to pay $6/month more for the additional service. This flagged the need for strong messaging related to the cost implications of diverting as much material as possible from the landfill.

The specific audiences for this strategy are single-family households with a bias toward families where the adults are aged 25 – 40, seniors living alone in single-family homes, and residents in neighbourhoods with cart placement issues.

**Program goals**

By enhancing participation in locally sponsored waste reduction, diversion and recycling programs, the social marketing strategy set both awareness and participation goals in support of the City of Leduc’s residential waste diversion target of 65% by 2021.

**Awareness / City leadership**

1. Increase awareness of waste reduction & diversion programs by talking to min. 10% of adult residents about the initiatives.
2. Increase awareness of the City’s commitment to environmental leadership in waste management by interacting with a minimum of five different segments of the community.

**Participation**

1. Prepared materials satisfy the communication requirements of at least 60% of respondents.
2. Inquiries and complaints related to the new program/service levels are dealt with satisfactorily by administrative staff – with less than 5% of complaints escalating to the Mayor’s Office.
3. Encourage resident participation so a minimum of 1,000 tonnes of organics is collected in 2012.
4. Encourage resident participation so the amount of recyclables collected in 2012 increases by at least 10% over 2011.
5. Increase residential waste diversion rate by at least 10% in 2012 over baseline year 2011.

**Key messages**

**Waste reduction leadership and benefits**

- Reducing waste is everyone’s responsibility.
- Waste reduction initiatives respond to one of the community’s top environmental priorities.
- The City’s approved goal is 65% residential diversion by 2021.
- The City champions initiatives that significantly contribute to achieving the approved waste reduction targets.
- Leduc’s expanded programs are offered at the same cost as the current service: more recycling – same cost.

**Waste diversion – “how to”**

- Curbside organics build off the current recycling program – it’s easy & convenient.
- Sorting the compostable organics from the garbage stream will reduce your garbage by more than half of what it is today.
- Carts are large enough to hold routine household organics and waste prior to pickup.
- Weekly pickup continues – recycling and organics weekly for most of the year - residual garbage every two weeks.
- Depot improvements provide expanded free recycling opportunities for all residents.
Anticipated obstacles and opportunities

1. Multiple operational changes to communicate at the same time as the new program is introduced. Before the City of Leduc contracted TDP to develop and implement the communications strategy, it decided to introduce an organics collection program, reduce waste collection from weekly pickup to biweekly pickup (to keep utility costs the same even with organics collection and further reduce waste) and add Mondays to the city’s curbside collection schedule (which changed curbside collection day for several neighbourhoods).

The new curbside collection service required new collection trucks and equipment, so participating households needed new carts (supplied by the City). The new collection trucks require more room to manoeuvre, so some households had their collection location changed from front street to back lane, or vice versa.

This complexity of messaging required very careful phasing of messages in print advertising (giving residents an opportunity to study details) while reinforcing the changes, with added details, on the City’s website. The City’s hotline staff were given detailed question-and-answer sheets to ensure they could offer immediate assistance to residents who called in.

Resident pressure points included widespread disagreement with biweekly waste collection, size of the cart, cart storage and general reticence to pay more for any enhanced service. These reactions were addressed by having the materials:

- point out the lesser amount of waste collected because a significant proportion of a household’s traditional waste is organic, which would now be collected weekly during the warmer months,
- offer frequent tips for storing carts and keeping them clean, and
- frequently repeating the key message that the enhanced service was offered at no utility rate increase.

2. Introduction of new program and operational changes started in the summer, the traditional vacation period for many residents. While residents’ attention was not focused on waste management during the hot summer months, we introduced the program concepts at a number of traditional summer events attended by our target audience of families. Those events gave us an opportunity for one-on-one contact and gave us a flavour of the types of questions residents had about the program that was being introduced.

3. The City’s waste management contractor was relatively new to the City’s requirements, so operational details weren’t all resolved as the communications program was being developed and implemented. The City’s operational staff ensured constant liaison among the three key areas: City administration, the waste management contractor and the communications consultant so the public received consistent messaging.

The project presented several communication challenges. The operational logistics (new organics pickup, some change of scheduled collection days, some change of pickup location, need for new carts, cart storage issues, change in waste pickup from weekly to biweekly and schedule changes in late fall) all presented communications opportunities. From a project management stance, time was tight for developing and implementing a multi-layered strategy.
### Implementation / Execution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TDP conducted research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td><strong>A comprehensive three-year strategy was presented to the City of Leduc in June.</strong></td>
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<td>The client team approved the plan, shared it with City Council and started work</td>
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<td>immediately on building the environmental image and brand. We knew messaging and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>branding needed to respect and reflect the current positive values while strengthening</td>
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<td>the commitment to change to serve the community’s long-term environmental</td>
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<td>wellbeing. Also, Council had directed that residents have direct access to City staff</td>
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<td>so we emphasized the Hotline and City e-mails in all products.</td>
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| July   | **Resident focus groups** were held in mid-July to assess general knowledge about       |
|        | the forthcoming new programming and to test key messages, various branding elements and  |
|        | draft creative treatments. We made changes in the branding and creative based on the    |
|        | feedback received – and were in time to include approved branding elements on the waste |
|        | and organics carts as they were being manufactured.                                    |

The DAGNY Partnership held **stakeholder workshops** with civic and environmental leaders. Those sessions reinforced the importance of the diversion target for both environmental and fiscal reasons. The stakeholders also pointed out a degree of public apathy for embracing new programming – placing increasing emphasis on the need for high-profile communication that connected the program specifics with the broader “good for the environment” message (reflected by new program branding).

Timing was crucial. Initial communication had to occur in July and August to inform residents of the new service basics before September implementation. Summer, however, is vacation time. We took advantage of several **community events** to start talking to residents through displays, staffed information tables, bookmarks, face tattoos and even a huge free cake decorated with the program branding. Events included the Black Gold Rodeo, Mainstreet Festival, several farmer’s markets and opportunities at the major community recreation program registration at the local recreation centre.

| August | **Print advertising and utility bill messaging begins.** With program implementation    |
|        | starting Sept. 17 for two collection days and Oct. 3 for the remaining three collection  |
|        | days, residents needed specifics on why the program was being introduced, how it worked |
|        | and where they could get detailed information. Research told us Leduc residents rely    |
|        | heavily on their local weekly newspaper so we prepared print ads to run mid-August     |
|        | promoting late August / early September public open houses in various neighbourhoods. |
|        | We did not use radio as an advertising medium since Leduc did not at that time have a   |
|        | radio station specific to its own community. Residents listen to radio stations from the|
|        | much larger city of Edmonton, about 30 miles north of Leduc.                           |

We also sent out a community-wide information sheet with residential utility bills. In addition, large boulevard signs promoted the open houses and, later, highlighted the start of the new service. One open house was held in a seniors’ centre to encourage seniors’ attendance.

| Late August / early Sept. | **Open houses and series of print ads with program details.** Concurrent with the open |
|                          | houses, we ran a flight of organics program rollout ads that built on the information   |
|                          | conveyed in the open house ads. We reinforced our paid advertising with a series of     |
|                          | media releases and social media posts (posted by the City with our messaging) through    |
|                          | out the project. As well, the City of Leduc Environmental                              |
Services staff were trained and ready to answer a newly established Eco-smart Hotline so resident calls would not escalate to the Mayor’s Office.

**September**

**Program rollout.** With the informational foundations set, we prepared comprehensive Customer Care Information kits, taped to the new carts when they were delivered to each household, to ensure residents had detailed information at their fingertips when the new services began. The information kits included a letter from the Mayor, a detailed brochure, a collection calendar specific to each neighbourhood’s collection day, an FAQ sheet, a sample compostable bag and a Sort Smart wheel with a magnet (to hold the wheel on the fridge – a handy location!) that told residents in a fun way how to sort dozens of specific materials.

Research and focus groups also underlined the importance of online communication – so we prepared a Sort Smart phone app for easy sorting reference, enhanced the City of Leduc Environmental Services website pages, [www.leduc.ca](http://www.leduc.ca), and prepared a series of online banners and ads that ran from late summer past program implementation.

As with most new programs, there were some operational “surprises” that required very prompt communication with residents. We used a combination of print advertising, online advertising and website updates, and worked with the City communications team to get these specific messages out through social media. As well, we worked with the operations team to develop a special collection sticker for those residents (primarily seniors) who couldn’t physically wheel their bins to and from the curb.

**November**

**Eco Station enhancements introduced.** While organics collection was the major focus of the new service, the City also introduced significantly enhanced services at its Eco Station, and also some changes to other related facilities. Initially, the team wanted a formal opening at the Eco Station to highlight its services but that was deferred because of the focus required for the larger organics collection program. These service enhancements were communicated through advertising, media relations and location-specific materials.

At the end of the year, special advertising and website additions helped residents understand the service changes when organics collection changed from weekly to biweekly service – and residents needed to clear their snow and ice to ensure cart pickup.
Open Houses (samples of communication tools)

The City of Leduc cordially invites residential utility customers who currently receive curbside garbage and recycling collection to an open house to learn more about the new automated cart and organics collection program being rolled out the week of Sept. 17.

**Wednesday, Aug. 22**
4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Leduc Civic Centre Atrium
1 Alexandra Park

**Thursday, Aug. 30**
4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Leduc Recreation Centre – in front of the curling rink
4330 Black Gold Dr.

**Wednesday, Sept. 5**
4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Telford House
4907 – 46 St.

Print ad promoting the open houses. The same ad was repeated in black and white. The colour art was used as a poster and distributed widely.

This web banner ad and its variations were run on websites frequented by Leduc families. This included the website of the local newspaper, The Leduc Rep.
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Entrants: City of Leduc and The DAGNY Partnership

Selected examples of display boards used at the Open Houses

Curbside Cart Collection & Recycling Program
- delivering a cleaner, healthier environment

Program objectives:
- Decrease 30% of the residential waste stream from landfilling by 2015
- Keep monthly utility costs the same
- Streamline Leduc’s waste collection system to better accommodate growth
- Create more opportunities to recycle commodities
- Advance our community’s environmental stewardship

Why divert more waste?
- Good for the environment
- Collected organics is turned into compost that can be used in our community
- Extends the life of the existing Waste Management Facility – spreading replacement costs over a longer period of time

Program highlights:
The City of Leduc will continue 60% diversion by:
- Introducing an automated cart collection service
- Expanding curbside services to include organics collection
- Enhancing year-round Eco Station (Recycling Depot) services
- Undertaking a public awareness campaign to ensure residents can participate fully in waste reduction initiatives

Expanded services for the same monthly utility rate.

Preparing for collection – placement key to successful collection

The golden rule of the curbside cart collection: select the cart(s) including above cart:

Front street collection:
1. Place your carts on the street either in front of this sidewalk or in front of your driveway. The wheels must be touching the edge of the street with the cart being toward, swap hands from your front.
2. Place the cart(s) 1 metre apart from each other; the blue cart and parked vehicle.

Back lane collection:
1. Place your cart on the edge of the lane on the driveway or parking spot with blue bags 1 metre away from your cart.
2. As above, keep 1 metre door on all sides of the cart, and above them.
3. In winter please clear the snow beside and in front of the cart for collection access.

Sorting Smart - It’s easy to do
1. Review the information material.
2. Continue to sort recyclables into a blue bag.
3. Sort your organics into the handy kitchen container or directly into the green organic cart.
4. Please what’s left - it won’t be much - into a garbage bag and then into the black waste cart.

On collection day:
- set out the cart and blue recycling bag by 7 a.m. according to your collection calendar.
- place them in front of your house or in the back lane with the wheels up against the curb.
- front street pickup - place on the sheet in front of your house with wheels against the curb.
- back lane pickup - place at the edge of the lane, driveway, or parking spot with wheels toward your property, and keep 5 metre access clear around and above your carts for safe collection.

Collection frequency

Your collection calendar highlights both your collection day and collection frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Cart Collection Program</th>
<th>New Cart Collection Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>Weekly collection - 4 bag cart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organics</td>
<td>Cart collection every 2 weeks (equivalent to 2-4 bags)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recyclables</td>
<td>Cart collection every 2 weeks in winter (equivalent to 2-4 bags)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yard Waste</td>
<td>Weekly collection - no blue bag limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Collections</td>
<td>Cart collection every 2 weeks in winter (equivalent to 2-4 bags)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential user fee</td>
<td>Collection round-up organics cart 1 week large item pickup 1 week Christmas tree pickup $21.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The monthly utility rate for collection remains the same - $21.50 per month (43.50 for a two-month billing cycle).
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Entrants: City of Leduc and The DAGNY Partnership

Brochure cover, featuring the wordmark graphic used throughout the campaign

Left: The Sort Smart wheel, with magnet on back
Right: The Sort Smart phone app
Each resident was given a collection calendar and a magnet to post the calendar in a convenient location. The two-sided calendar showed eight months of service, through the spring collection schedule change, as well as various sorting tips.
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Entrants: City of Leduc and The DAGNY Partnership

Print advertising (selected samples from a series of rollout ads)

Curbside cart collection phased ROLLOUT begins

New collection schedule effective week of Sept. 17 for all residents.

Where will your collection take place?
Your carts will be dropped off either by your front curb or your back lane. Your location is where collection will actually occur.

Collection locations will change:
- Collection moving from the back lane to the front street accommodates the expansion of the collection teams.
- Collection moving from the front street to the back lane makes collection more convenient for you.

Organics and waste cart collection phased in by collection day
If your new collection day is Monday or Tuesday, start using your new carts for organics and waste collection the week of Sept. 17.
If your new collection day is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday – start using your new carts for organics and waste collection the week of Oct. 1.

Cart delivery phased in by new collection day
If your new collection day is Monday or Tuesday, you will receive the cart you need to participate in the new curbside cart collection program between Monday, Sept. 1 and Saturday, Sept. 10.
If your new collection day is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, you will receive your cart starting Sept. 11, to be used Sept. 17.

Organics and waste cart collection phased in by collection day
If your new collection day is Monday or Tuesday, start using your new carts for organics and waste collection the week of Sept. 17.
If your new collection day is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday – start using your new carts for organics and waste collection the week of Oct. 1.

Information at your fingertips
Information kit attached to your waste cart – all the information you need to participate in curbside cart collection.
www.leduc.ca – for details on curbside cart collection and all other City of Leduc waste management programs.
E-mail: smartwaste@leduc.ca

So Betty Smart phone app
Eco-smart Hotline: 780.980.7107
E-mail: ecosmart@leduc.ca

Curbside cart collection phased ROLLOUT continues

New collection schedule starts week of Sept. 17
Leduc moves to a five-day collection service with Mondays added. The collection day for most neighbourhoods remains the same. Check out your collection day at www.leduc.ca.

Organics and waste collector phased in by collection day
If you have a collection day of Monday or Tuesday – start using your new carts for organics and waste collection the week of Sept. 17.
If your new collection day is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday – start using your new carts for organics and waste collection the week of Oct. 1.

How often will collection take place?
Organics cart Weekly collection until the third week of November, then every two weeks to the third week of April.
Black waste cart Every two weeks
Blue bag Weekly

To bag or not to bag - ORGANICS CART
You can place your organics loose in the cart. Bagging or wrapping some items will reduce moisture, but bags are not required in an approved 100% compostable bag.

For those with mobility challenges
Some residents may have physical challenges moving the cart. Card the Eco-smart hotline at 780.980.7107 to devise your solution.

Information at your fingertips
Information kit (with your waste cart)
www.leduc.ca Eco-smart Hotline: 780.980.7107 E-mail: ecosmart@leduc.ca
2014 SWANA Communication Excellence Award
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Curbside cart collection
...introducing ORGANICS

SORT SMART
Easy to do! Take your information package off the black cart lid for tips on sorting and placement. Here's a few to get you started.

Organics
All fruit and veg waste, any items made from natural materials.
- Fruits (peeled)
- Local products
- Tapioca
- Fresh produce
- Bread, rolls, buns
- Bagged produce

Waste cart
Any household items that aren't organic or can't be recycled.
- Plastic glass
- Plastic containers (beer cans)
- Diapers
- Garden hose
- Garden waste
- Matt & foam
- Treated paper
- Cardboard
- Tin cans

Blue bag recycling
Recyclables - plastic containers with the recycling symbol and clear/colored plastic bottles and glass.
- Tin cans
- Aluminum foil and cans
- Bottle caps
- Resin and glass
- Iron and steel
- Mixed metals
- Cardboard
- Paper & paper products

CART COLLECTION
Changes pickup locations
Collects day changes twice each the week of Sept 17. The changes involve changing for selected streets in the following neighborhoods when your cart collection service begins:

For Monday or Tuesday collection:
- New track line pickup - Northwood + Southfork
- New track line pickup - North Valley + Bow Valley

For Wednesday, Thursday or Friday collection:
- New track line pickup - Bridlewood + Deer Creek Estates + Tuscany + West Haven Estates

If your new collection day is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, you will receive your cart collection schedule for the week of Sept 17. For more information, please call 780.980.7107.

Placing your cart for pickup
Keep 1 metre clear on all sides of the cart - including above the cart. The automated 6-metre scan of the collection truck needs this space to avoid any cart safety issues.

Use your old carts or bags!
Your new carts will arrive before the new service begins. Please return your old cart to your local services place after the new cart has been delivered to your house. Note: your old cart will be collected as a convenience cart in one of our local parks in the area where your new cart is placed.

Be a good neighbour!
Respect your neighbors need for curb space on collection day and ensure your cart is placed outside your street so that everyone can reach it safely.

Information at your fingertips
Information kit with your black cart:
SORT SMART information kit
www.leduc.ca

Curbside cart & organics collection

SORT SMART
Easy to do! Peel your information package off the black cart lid for sorting tips. Here's a few to get you started.

Organics
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If your new collection day is Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, you will receive your cart collection schedule for the week of Sept 17. For more information, please call 780.980.7107.

Cart placement is important
Leave space on collection day and please park extra vehicles off the street.

Be a good neighbour!
Leave cart wheels against the cart. Don't place small items on top of the cart. Use a set of cart wheels and place on the street.

Cart placement tips
- Leave cart wheels against the cart.
- Don't place small items on the top of the cart.
- Park extra vehicles off the street.
- Move blue bags in the area where the cart will be placed.
- Detach kitchen container from the cart.

Check out your SORT SMART information kit (in your black waste cart) and www.leduc.ca
Roles and responsibilities
TDP was responsible for all strategic communication development and implementation, communication budget management and administrative followup. The City was responsible for operational decisions and implementation, communication with City Council and direct interaction with residents. TDP and the City’s communications team shared responsibility for media relations. City communications handled social media with our messaging and uploaded our material onto the City website.

When the project began, we established team roles and arranged formal conference calls biweekly during planning, then weekly throughout the implementation stage. TDP completed action minutes, outlining each individual’s responsibilities, with required deadlines. Face-to-face meetings were minimized to save time and budget but were held when direct access to the collection contractors was needed to talk through operational issues from a communications perspective.

Budget
Social marketing toolbox (creative, ads, info pieces, phone all, etc.) $ 20,750
Awareness building (community outreach, social media, etc.) $ 3,250
Participation building (information kit, ads, media relations, Eco Station, etc.) $ 45,650
Project management and evaluation $ 12,500
Program total: $ 82,150

Funding leverage
The local newspaper, the Leduc Representative (The Rep), published most of the news releases we distributed, significantly leveraging the reach of our print media buys. The newspaper also responded to invitations for photo opportunities as well, adding a visual element to their coverage of the new programs. Since The Rep is the only media outlet directly focusing on Leduc news, this support became a significant factor.

As well, the support of the City of Leduc Communications Department was significant. TDP developed the key messages for each component of the campaign, and then the Communications Department used their key messages — ensuring consistency of message — through their social media networks, utility bill messages and various types of signage including signs in the popular Leduc Recreation Centre and boulevard signs.

Accomplishing planned program initiatives
All the components, materials and initiatives outlined in the plan were successfully implemented on time and within budget — with the exception of the promotion of the Eco Station’s enhanced services. That component was completed, but the team chose to move its communication back about two months to give residents time to get used to all the operational changes and new programming.

Unique program aspects
While the operational aspects of the curbside organics collection program are very similar to others, including two other municipalities in proximity to Leduc, there were several innovation aspects to the program communication:

• Phone app for sorting assistance. The “Sort Smart” phone app took Leduc’s relatively young resident population into effect. Research showed the young families liked to receive information on their phones and tablets -- and the phone app was very well received.

• “Sort Smart” wheel. This simple wheel showed graphically the best way to sort a variety of materials. Its “fun” approach to sorting caught the attention of families. We mounted a magnet on the back of the wheel so families could mount it on their fridge to keep the wheel (and its information) handy.

• We also produced a number of innovative products to ensure the key messages were distributed various ways throughout the entire community. These included bookmarks with key operational
dates, face tattoos to focus family attention at community events and series of electronic web
banners posted on popular sites.

Results / Evaluation
1. **Increase awareness by talking to at least 10% of adult residents.** Direct interactions: open
Total: 4,118, or 16% of Leduc’s population.

2. **Awareness of City commitment to environmental leadership: interact with minimum five
segments.** 1) Stakeholder focus groups. 2) Interested residents at open houses. 3) Families
(general) at recreation centre and summer events. 4) Seniors at open house and through
special collection communication. 5) Eco Station users with location-specific materials.

3. **Prepared materials satisfy at least 60% of respondents.** We developed a self-directed online
survey posted on the City website in late 2012, completed by 428 residents. While the results are
considered qualitative, they show:

- almost 80% of respondents have no remaining questions about the program;
- all cart information pieces were used and valued. 89% used the brochure; 87% used the
calendar; 61% used the cart label; 59% used the Sort Smart wheel. 15% gained basic
information from an open house.
- Of 18 communication tools listed on the survey, 75-91% of respondents gave 14 items a
satisfactory or higher rating.
- The enhanced pages on the City website, www.leduc.ca, were well used. From Aug. 31 – Oct.
31, the curbside collection and recycling page received 4,175 page views (2,990 unique and
8% of the City’s traffic) with 1:10 minutes spent on average on the page. Traffic on this page
only trailed the home page and the jobs section. Average time spent/page: collection calendar
and routes page, 2:21; organics cart contents, 2:20; blue bag recycling, 1:53; Sort Smart,
2:28; waste cart, 1:52; organics cart pre, 1:04; utility costs and revenues, 1:10; cart
placement, 50 seconds.

4. **Less than 5% of complaints escalated to the Mayor’s Office.** Total inquiries 2,618. Total
forwarded to Mayor’s Office, less than 5 = <0.2%.

5. **Minimum of 1,000 tonnes of organics collected in 2012.** More than 1,200 tonnes collected.

6. **Curbside recyclables collected in 2012 increases by at least 10% over 2011.** 1,076 tonnes
collected in 2012, up from 908 tonnes in 2011, an increase of 18.5%. In addition, about 700 tonnes
of recyclables collected at the Eco Station.

7. **Increase waste diversion rate by at least 10% over 2011.** Achieved 15-25% increase over
2011: 20%. 2012: 23% - 25%. Based on a partial year of organics collection, this is on track to
meet interim goal of 45% waste diversion by 2013.

*Program improvements*
While results from the communication program were very positive, improvement is always possible.

At the onset of all the operational changes to the City of Leduc’s waste management practices, for
example, more dialogue between the operations team and the communications team while the
operational program was under development would have been helpful. As well, more lead time to
develop and implement the communications strategy would have saved time and stress on team
members.
Regarding the specific communication components, further development of community relations aspects would have been helpful. More community relations would have helped to leverage resources and develop ongoing relationships with community partners such as the public library and the schools.

As our society moves ever further toward digital communication, more online and digital applications would have enhanced resident response as well.

*Replicating the program in other communities*

The majority of this program would quite easily be transferable to other municipalities — assuming a dedicated staff team commitment is in place since such multi-layered programs do require close team dynamics throughout the campaign.

Other jurisdictions should be aware, however, that the specifics of this program are based on research results from Leduc. For example, our primary target audience of young families, with a secondary audience including senior citizens still living in their own homes, may not be the same demographic mix as other municipalities have. In that case, other municipalities looking to implement a similar program are strongly encouraged to facilitate their own research so this program can be amended as required to exactly fit their demographics, and the knowledge and attitudes of their residents.
Leduc initiates phased rollout of new organics program
– Municipality receives valuable input from residents during 3 open houses

The City of Leduc began a phased rollout for new cart delivery to all residential utility ratepayers on Sept. 3, 2012 as part of the new Curbside Cart Collection and Recycling Program. To help raise public awareness on this program, the city hosted three successful open houses and spoke with more than 1,000 citizens.

All residential utility ratepayers will receive two carts and a kitchen container. The black cart is for garbage (waste), green cart is for all organic materials and the kitchen container can be used to gather organic material from within the home.

Tips
To answer questions administration heard from residents, here are a few tips:

- Cart placement on pick up days requires a one metre radius around each cart; place carts directly on the street with the wheels against the curb before 7 a.m.
- Green organics carts can be lined with compostable brown paper yard waste bags, as well as the 100 per cent compostable bags (residents can line the container and green cart with a 100 per cent compostable bag, marked by the manufacturer with both the U.S. and Canadian compostable logos)
- Cart storage options include, along the side of your home, on parking pads, in front or beside a deck, or on the driveway near the garage. The carts can also be stored one in front of the other for narrow driveways
- Write the home address in black marker on the white label area of each cart. These carts are owned by the City of Leduc and assigned to each address, not the homeowners
- Detailed information on the new program can be found on Leduc.ca, click on ‘Organics’ or by calling the Eco-smart hotline at 780-980-7107 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

Phased rollout
Phase 1 – carts delivered first half of September 2012 (first collection days are Sept. 17 and 18)
- **Monday** pick-up communities are Corinthia, Southfork, Meadowview and Robinson
- **Tuesday** pick-up communities are North and South Telford, Southpark and Alexandra Park south of 50 Avenue

Phase 2 – carts delivered second half of September (first collection days are Oct. 3, 4 and 5)
- **Wednesday** pick-up communities are Deer Valley, Bridgeport and West Haven
- **Thursday** pick-up communities are Lakeside Estates, Leduc Estates, Tribute and Caledonia
- **Friday** pick-up communities are Suntree, Windrose, Willow Park, central business district, Linsford Park, Alexandra Park north of 50 Avenue

For more information, visit Leduc.ca or call the Eco-smart hotline at 780-980-7107.

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Initial participation positive for Leduc’s new organics program – Cart placement and content vital to overall success of automated collection

The City of Leduc has witnessed positive participation from residents in the first collection phase under the new Curbside Cart Collection and Recycling Program, Sept. 17 – 18, 2012.

The residential waste management collection contractor, Ever Green Ecological Services, is using cart stickers to inform residents on proper cart placement and content. During the transition, residents will see a series of trucks in their neighbourhoods. Carts are repositioned for better access and then stickered to make the homeowner aware of the preferred location. Following this initial visit, collection trucks for the carts will begin their route. The neighbourhoods included in the first-phase of the program are Southfork, Corinthia, Meadowview, Robinson, North and South Telford, South Park and Alexandra Park (south of 50 Avenue). Visit Leduc.ca and click on ‘Organics’ for a detailed list of cart contents for organics, waste and blue bags.

“Overall we’re very encouraged with the preliminary participation rates,” says Kevin Cole, director of Engineering with the City of Leduc. “By working with residents through this transition period, we are confident we’ll achieve our waste diversion goal of reducing residential waste by 65 per cent by the year 2021.”

Tips to remember:

- Place carts and blue bags out on collections days before 7 a.m.
- Cart placement requires a one metre radius, including the top and blue bags. Blue bags can be placed behind carts.
  - Front curb pick-up: keep carts clear of vehicles. Carts must be front-facing the street and the wheels against the curb.
  - Back alley pick-up: keep carts clear of fences and garages. They can be placed on to the edge of the alley on collection day.
  - Cul-de-sacs: same rules apply for front curb pick-up. If vehicles prevent curb access, pull the carts closer towards the centre of the cul-de-sac
- Blue bags are collected weekly with no bag limit. Contents must be clean and dry
- Green carts are for organic materials and can be bagged using 100 per cent compostable bags or placed loose in the cart
  - Weekly collection will run until Nov. 16, 2012
  - Collection every two weeks will run from Nov. 19, 2012 to April 19, 2013
- Black carts are for waste and all contents must be bagged before placed in cart. Collection is every two weeks

For more information email ecosmart@leduc.ca or call the Eco-smart hotline at 780-980-7107
Curbside cart collection schedule changes in late November
– Organics and waste carts alternate weekly collections starting Nov. 26, 2012

The week of Nov. 19 completes the schedule of weekly curbside organic cart collection. The cold-weather schedule starts the week of Nov. 26 with the organics cart and the waste cart picked up on alternate weeks. Blue bag recyclables continue to be collected weekly.

Residents are asked to put out their organics cart and blue bags as usual the week of Nov. 19. The week of Nov. 26, residents will put out only their waste cart and blue bags for collection, starting the alternating weekly schedule between organics cart and waste cart collection.

“With the 2012 summer growing season behind us and fall yard cleanup complete, the amount of material in the organics carts decreases significantly,” says Kevin Cole, director of Engineering with the City of Leduc. “Throughout late fall and winter, the organics cart will easily hold the food scraps and other indoor organic material collected over a two-week period.”

Residents can check the collection schedule on the calendars that were included with their information kits when the new curbside cart collection service began, or they can visit the website (www.leduc.ca).

When the weather gets cold, residents can keep their organic material from freezing to the cart by placing newspaper or soiled cardboard in the bottom of the cart. Residents are reminded that no plastic bags are to be put in the organics cart.

Residents are welcome to use 100 per cent compostable bags to line their organics cart or to wrap their organics material from the house. These bags are made from natural products such as corn starch and decompose quickly. The approved bags are marked by the manufacturer with both the American and Canadian compostable logos.

As winter approaches, residents are reminded that their carts are sturdy enough to be stored outside even in very cold weather.

The collection schedule reverts to warm weather collection in late April 2013.

For more information, email ecosmart@leduc.ca or call the Eco-smart Hotline at 780-980-7107.

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Brand new changes at the Leduc Eco Station

Bobby Roy
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Residents are taking advantage of the new services at Leduc's Eco Station, explained Ryan Graham, infrastructure coordinator with the city.

"I've talked to the attendant briefly and he said they've stayed pretty busy with about 100 cars per day," he said.

The new services at the station were offered as part of the city's expanded curbside collection and organics program. There are some new changes at the Eco Station, which includes new hours, days of operation, charges, and a focus on security measures.

"With the expanded services, we've hired an attendant so it needed to be fenced in," said Graham. He added, although he isn't aware of the status of a security camera at the facility yet, there may be one installed in the future to deter people from dumping their waste after hours.

The Eco Station is open Tuesday and Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday 2-8 p.m. It is closed Sundays and Mondays.

The new hours may have some residents clamouring about them, but according to Graham, he doesn't believe it's an issue.

"We have two waste bins there and they're quite full from what I'm told. As far as I understand it hasn't been much of an issue."

Although the city's website says there is a $5 per bag for extra household waste payable at the Eco Station, the charges have not come into affect as of yet.

"We're currently not charging. We're using this as a transition period to educate the public about the changes," answered Graham.

Once the transition period expires, the city will charge the $2, which can be paid using cash or credit card. There will be a machine similar to ones used at car and truck washes installed to process the payments in the coming weeks, added Graham.

The station is located at 6102-46 Street in Leduc. Any type of garbage bags is welcome at the Eco Station, which isn't the case for the green organics bin. The only bags allowed to store the organic waste must be selected see-through 100 per cent compostable bags marked by the manufacturer with both the U.S. and Canadian compostable logos are approved for use in one's organic cart.

Some of the household hazardous waste items allowed at the Eco Station include:

- Abrasive cleaners
- Acetone
- Aerosol cans
- Batteries (all types)
- Bleach
- Brass polish
- Bug spray
- Gas
- Glass cleaner
- Glue
- Electrical waste items
- Electronic cables
- Electronic games
- Fax machine
- Hard drives
- For a full list of all the items allowed at the station visit http://bit.ly/PL4vJo.

For more information, contact the Eco-smart hotline at 780-980-7107.

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