

# Reaching Tomorrow's Customers: Public Power in Our Schools

June 11, 2019



## About Austin Utilities

- ▶ Located in SE MINNESOTA
- ▶ Electric (12,300 meters)  
Natural Gas (10,300)  
Water (9,000)
- ▶ Serving customers since 1877



## MN Conservation Improvement Program (CIP)

- ▶ The Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 established energy-saving goals for electric and gas utilities in the state of Minnesota.
  - ▶ Spend 1.5% Electric, 0.5% Gas - Annual Revenues
  - ▶ Save 1.5% Electric, 1.5% Gas - Annual Sales
- ▶ Report Plans with Commerce every three years to outline compliance with MN Statutes 216B.241 and 216B.2411.
- ▶ **Conservation Education is a CIP allowable expense**



Problem –

We Make Connections for Better Living

- ▶ Struggled for years connecting with schools
  - ▶ Lack of AU manpower
  - ▶ Lack of AU knowledge of “teacher language”
  - ▶ Lack of interest from schools
  - ▶ The need to match Academic Standards



## Solution - School Kit Program

- ▶ Turnkey Solution
- ▶ They speak “teacher language”
- ▶ Connect with kids at the school
- ▶ Kids connect with Parents at home
- ▶ Good use of CIP funds
  - ▶ Some savings to put towards CIP goal



## Benefits of the NEF Partnership

- ▶ Flexible on allowing us to partner with another utility
- ▶ Flexible on kit items and written content
- ▶ Offered a quantity discount
- ▶ Allowed us to **create our own branding**

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## Benefits of the NEF Partnership

- ▶ NEF staff was easy to work with
- ▶ They speak “teacher language”
- ▶ They know where to find info needed
- ▶ K-12 Academic Standards documentation
- ▶ They handled issues with gentle persuasion



## The Program

- ▶ NEF identifies schools/teachers/student count
- ▶ NEF and utility work on customization
- ▶ NEF makes contacts to sign up teachers
- ▶ Teachers launch program and send kits home with students
- ▶ Feedback is gathered by NEF and reported back to utility
- ▶ Teachers receive a \$50 Visa gift card with 80% reporting participation





## How We Managed Costs

- ▶ Worked with a partner utility
- ▶ Applied for a state education grant
- ▶ Used energy savings towards CIP goal
- ▶ Received some reimbursement from power agency
- ▶ Use kit to promote –
  - ▶ Electric, Gas, Water Conservation
  - ▶ Rebate Programs



## Great Feedback from Students!

4/25/19

Dear Austin utilities,  
I am one of the students who received  
the take action think energy kit.  
I'd like to thank you its amazing. Me and  
my Dad learned alot and had a fun time  
using it we used it all thank you.



## Great Feedback from Parents!



“My son was excited to learn about energy conservation at school then come home with a kit and share what he learned. He even shared some tips with his grandma! The contents of the kit and worksheet gave us an opportunity to talk about saving energy. A conversation that may not have happened without it.”



## Great Feedback from Teachers!

- ▶ “Thank you so much for providing a great program for families to communicate about energy use and saving money!”
- ▶ “My kids were thrilled with the gadgets they received”





## Some Program info -

- ▶ 434 of kits delivered (864 with OPU)
- ▶ 12 energy saving items per kit
  - ▶ Kit energy savings is CIP reportable
- ▶ Total Cost \$13,856
  - ▶ Received \$5,000 state grant
  - ▶ Received \$1,780 from wholesale agency



Any Questions?  
Thank You!

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The logo for Project Conserve & \$ave features the word "PROJECT" in green, with a red apple icon replacing the letter "O". Below it, the words "CONSERVE & \$AVE" are written in green, with a blue and green globe icon replacing the letter "O".

AU

The logo for Austin Utilities, consisting of the letters "AU" in a white, stylized font on a green background.