

# Water Conservation Program Development

How do we get there from here?

# Where to Begin?

- Review other programs – who is leading the way?
- Review past water use patterns
- Set Goals
- Review Conservation Initiatives.
- Compare initiatives in terms of your customer needs, program goals, benchmarks, and cost effectiveness.

# Reinventing the Wheel?

- Conservation professionals are your best friends.
- Make a site visit to see a program on the ground ask what it takes to run it, what worked, what did not.
- We are not alone in doing this - learn from successes and failures.
- Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.
- It does not have to be brand new to be effective.
- Adjust the idea for your customer base

# Sorting it Out

- There are so many options which ones are right for you?
- Know your customer base – not all programs are a fit for your customers.
- Start manageably – concentrate on few core programs
- Establish Water Efficiency Ethic with Customers
- Expand Programs slowly, with the pace of your customers.
- Choose usage sector to target programs.

# Setting Goals

- We sell water – How much can we afford to save?
- Balance the bottom line with responsible resource management.
- Target areas deemed as excessive use (sectors, outdoor use, geographic areas, etc.)
- Programs take time to take hold and generate savings.
- Water saved is the cheapest source of water as systems' service areas expand.
- Work with business management to make sure conservation and revenue goals coincide.

# Have a Plan

- Spend the time to draft a Conservation Plan.
- Go over it with Political leadership.
- Include a timeline of implementation.
- Set goals and priorities.
- Define your targeted use sectors for each program.
- Have a budget outlined.
- Gives you something to refer back to - use at budget time, to track program goals, and with political leadership.

# Total Approach

- Education is a vital component.
- Customers need to understand why it is important.
- Provide Materials for your customers to lower their use.
- Use local resources and partners to get the word out.
- Conservation rates – balance water efficiency and sound revenue planning.

# Essentials

- Develop a method to track water use.
- Develop Databases to account for material distribution.
- Buy-in: Water System Management, Political Support, Community Leaders.
- Educate Water System staff about program.
- Evaluate programs and make necessary changes.
- Adjust plan to customers needs and responses.
- Let the municipality or county lead by example.

It isn't Always Easy!



# Finding out the Hard Way

- Conservation – Negative Connotation to the Public.
- Frame the need for efficiency in terms of Georgia's issues.
- Be prepared for pushback – customers don't want to be told how to use water.
- Water is a basic life need – Customers feel entitled.
- Historically low water costs make getting the point about the need for efficiency difficult.
- Issues about Growth will be tied to the program.
- Difficult Balance – Importance of Efficiency vs. Public panic over water availability.

# If I knew then...What I know now

- ◆ Involved Green Industry at program onset.
- ◆ Met with Key Community Leaders – to get their support.
- ◆ Developed base line water use reports – usage prior to the program's launch.
- ◆ Set short term usage reduction goals at the programs development.
- ◆ Spent more time educating leadership about the role of conservation rates in overall program.

# Cobb County Water System

Thank You



*Cobb County...Expect the Best!*