

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee
From: Micha Gutmanis, Environmental Services Coordinator

Date: 2018-04-10
File No: 9050-20-005

Subject: Wood Stove Exchange Program Update

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of information pertaining to the Wood Stove Exchange Program. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification to discuss the item further.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

Support Environmental Stewardship

PRIORITIES

Priority #2 Air & Water Quality

BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) has been operating a Wood Stove Exchange Program since 2009 to improve air quality in the Lower Fraser Valley by reducing wood smoke and emissions of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The Program is designed to encourage BC residents to replace old, inefficient wood burning stoves with new, high efficiency appliances approved by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Through this Program, a \$250 or \$400 incentive is offered to FVRD residents to partially cover the cost of upgrading their wood stoves to less polluting models. In previous years, a \$250 rebate was given out to residents who swap their old wood burning stove to a new EPA/CSA certified wood stove. In 2018, an additional rebate of \$400 was introduced for those who are swapping out their old wood burning appliance for a cleaner alternative such as pellet, gas, electric, or heat pump.

The overarching objective of the FVRD's Wood Stove Exchange Program is to improve air quality in the Lower Fraser Valley Airshed by reducing emissions from residential wood burning. Specific program objectives are to:

1. Provide FVRD residents who are currently heating their homes with a non-EPA approved wood burning appliance with an incentive to exchange it for a cleaner burning alternative.

2. Educate FVRD residents about proper wood seasoning and burning techniques, and provide information about safe wood stove operation and installation. This is done in partnership with the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) through their "Let's Clear the Air" campaign.
3. Ensure the permanent decommissioning of non-EPA wood burning appliances exchanged under the program.
4. Increase awareness of the program and its objectives among local retailers, insurance companies and other stakeholders.

Program information is delivered through a variety of different mechanisms including marketing materials, workshops, and social media, as well as capitalizing on collaborative opportunities that may present themselves with local service and community groups. Other educational outreach efforts include implementing community-based social marketing practices and making effective use of the FVRD's social media channels: Facebook and Twitter.

DISCUSSION

In 2017, 19 woodstove exchanges were completed in the FVRD. This represents a reduction of 280 kilograms of PM_{2.5} emissions released into our airshed, equivalent to removing 17 older heavy duty diesel trucks.

Since the launch of the Woodstove Exchange Program in the FVRD, 250 old wood-burning stoves have been exchanged. The number of wood stove exchanges in the FVRD varies from 16–49 per year from 2009-2017.

On the 15th of November, 2017 the FVRD hosted a 'Wood Heat Workshop' in Electoral Area H at the Cultus Lake Fire Hall. This workshop provided residents with tips and techniques on improving the efficiency of wood heating systems to reduce smoke emissions. The free event allowed participants to learn about how to prepare their firewood, the benefits of EPA/CSA-certified appliances, and how to properly care for your wood burning appliance. Participants were also provided with information about the FVRD Wood Stove Exchange Program.

Facilitator Zigi Gadomski presented his in-depth knowledge – starting from his days as a chimney sweep, through his role as president of WETBC (Wood Energy Technicians of British Columbia) – with facts and fun eye-opening demonstrations. He brought an inefficient wood stove and an EPA/CSA-certified stove to compare and demonstrate the difference in smoke levels the two produce. Participants also brought a sample of wood from their home to test its moisture level content. Each participant took home a 'Burn It Smart' DVD and a free moisture meter for testing their firewood.

The FVRD is planning to host another Wood Heat Workshop in the fall of 2018 in which marketing will be done through social media, mail-outs, and through radio ads to increase attendance. The current Wood Stove Exchange Program brochures and hand-out material will be updated with a new look, they will reflect the new program changes, and more information will be posted through Facebook and Twitter.

COST

The FVRD successfully applied for funding from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change for continued funding for the Wood Stove Exchange Program. The FVRD received \$12,000 which will support 30 (\$400) exchanges in 2018. This funding can be used for either a \$250 or \$400 wood stove exchange rebate, depending on which wood stove appliance is purchased and can be carried over into 2019 if the funding has not been exhausted.

CONCLUSION

Based on past years' performance and an estimate of the additional applications we can expect through the joint educational and marketing efforts of FBC and FVRD, we anticipate carrying out about 30 exchanges in 2018. There is an expectation that there will be an increase in the number of exchanges due to the increased value of the rebate (\$400) for wood stove to an electric heat pump, pellet stove, or natural gas appliance.

The Wood Stove Exchange program is one of the most practical ways to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions from residential burning and will be carried forward into 2018 with funding from the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.

COMMENT BY:

Barclay Pitkethly, Director of Regional Programs

Reviewed and supported.

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services

Reviewed and supported.

Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed and supported