

Conservation Outreach: *An Innovative Approach for Water Departments to Assist Environmental Advocacy Groups*

Eric Hooper, P.E. Town of Sharon Superintendent of Public Works



**Water Resources Commission
August 11, 2016**

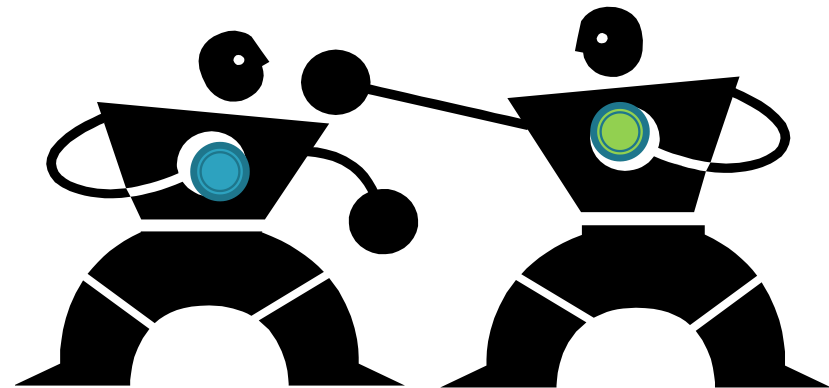
The Usual State of Affairs: Water Use, Conservation and Data Collection

Municipal Water Supplier (good guys) **vs** Environmentalists (ineffective? guys)

Marketing Water Use Conservation

Expanding the Message

Traditional Media Outlets **vs** Social Media



Perception Problems

Public Water Supplier = Pump the Planet Dry

Start the discussion with what's best for the Water Department



- One World
- One People
- One Irrigated Lawn

Perception Problems

Watershed Advocacy = Save the Planet

Start the discussion with what's best for the environment and at no cost to our organization

- The Sky is Falling!
- One World, One People and One Shower or One Composting Toilet, **not both**



Early Data Collection and Conservation Efforts



Data Collection

- Manual meter read at infrequent intervals

Outreach

- **Rebate Programs** for low flow toilets and clothes washers
- **Education Outreach: Science First**
- **Fliers/Bill Stuffers**

Technical

- **Mandatory** Outdoor Water Restrictions:
 - *Two hours per day, two days per week.*
- Outsourced **leak detection** twice per year
- Meters – Updated master meters, radio read residential meters
- **\$1 million/year** water main replacement program
- Plumbing Code changes

Lessons Learned



- ▶ Manual meter read essentially useless
- ▶ Conservation message get stale quickly.
- ▶ General messages are not effective.
- ▶ Traditional message outlets and approaches do not allow for the message to be refreshed easily or timely.
- ▶ Water Department as “messenger” may not be best.

Innovative Outreach and Data Collection Efforts

- The Messenger
- Social Media
- Information: Transition to AMR/AMI meters
- Targeted Messaging

Gaining Information

The screenshot displays the WaterSmart software interface for the Town of Sharon Department of Public Works. The browser address bar shows the URL <https://admin-townofsharon.watersmart.com/index>. The interface includes a sidebar menu with options like HOME, CUSTOMERS, ANALYTICS, and ENGAGEMENT. The main content area is titled "Town of Sharon Department of Public Works" and features several data sections:

- Accounts:** A table listing account types and their counts: SFR (5,583), Commercial (121), Municipal (37), and Irrigation-Only (14).
- Data status:** Information about data uploads, including "Uploaded Feb 12, 2016" and "Most recent complete period 2016-1 Dec 27 - Mar 26, 2016".
- Analytics:** Three key performance indicators (KPIs) are shown with bar charts and trend indicators:
 - Consumption:** 82.5 MG in Period 2016-1. Compared to previous period: \downarrow 39%. Compared to one year ago: \downarrow 5.0%. A bar chart titled "TOTAL MG BY READING PERIOD" shows data for 2014, 2015, and 2016.
 - Leaks:** 3 detected in Period 2016-1, compared to 38 detected since Jan 1, 2015. A bar chart titled "LEAKS DETECTED BY PERIOD" shows data for 2014, 2015, and 2016.
 - Tier Consumption:** 8.6% of SFR accounts within Tier 1 in Period 2016-1. Compared to previous period: \uparrow 29%. Compared to one year ago: \uparrow 9.9%. A bar chart titled "% ACCOUNTS WITHIN TIER 1" shows data for 2015 and 2016.

The bottom of the screen shows the Windows taskbar with various application icons and the system clock displaying 2:28 PM on 3/31/2016.

Tracking System Wide Data

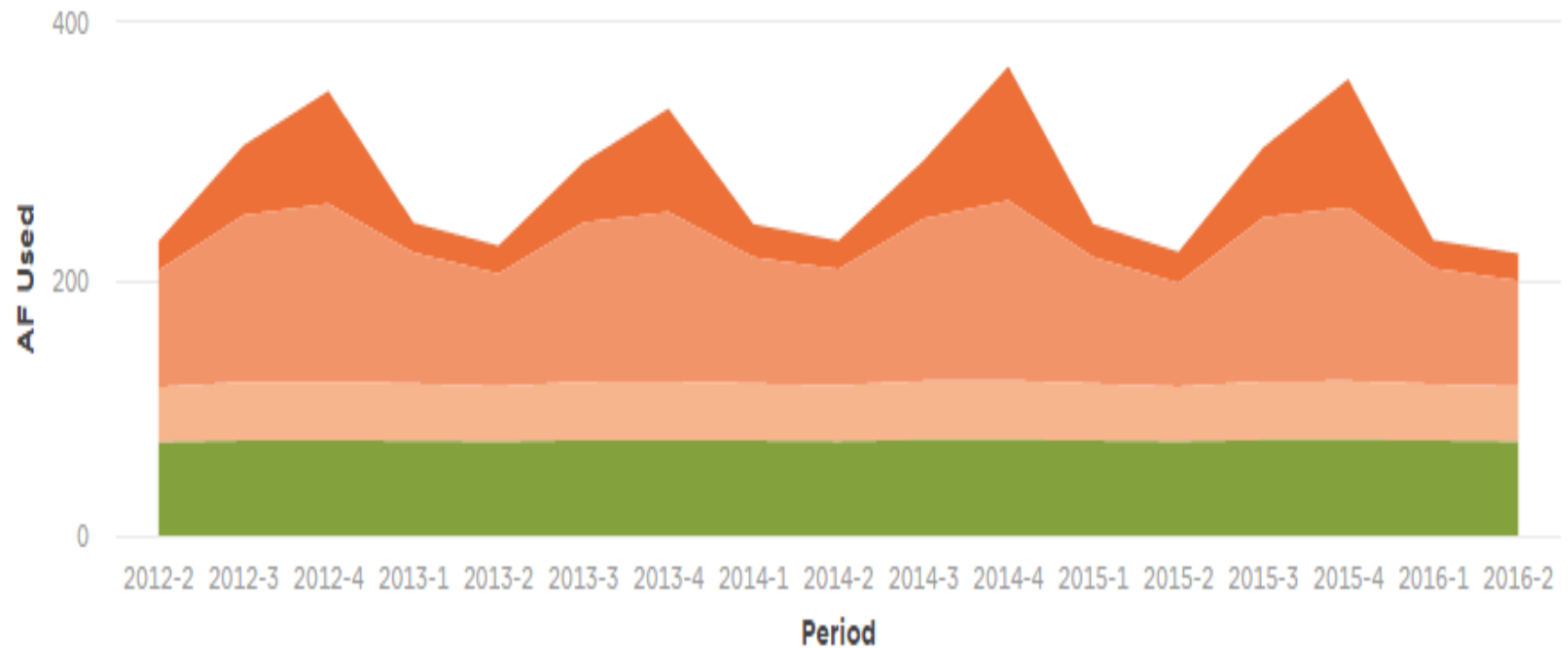
History

VOLUME % ACCOUNTS

ACCOUNT TYPE

SFR ▼

Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3 Tier 4



Tracking System Wide Data

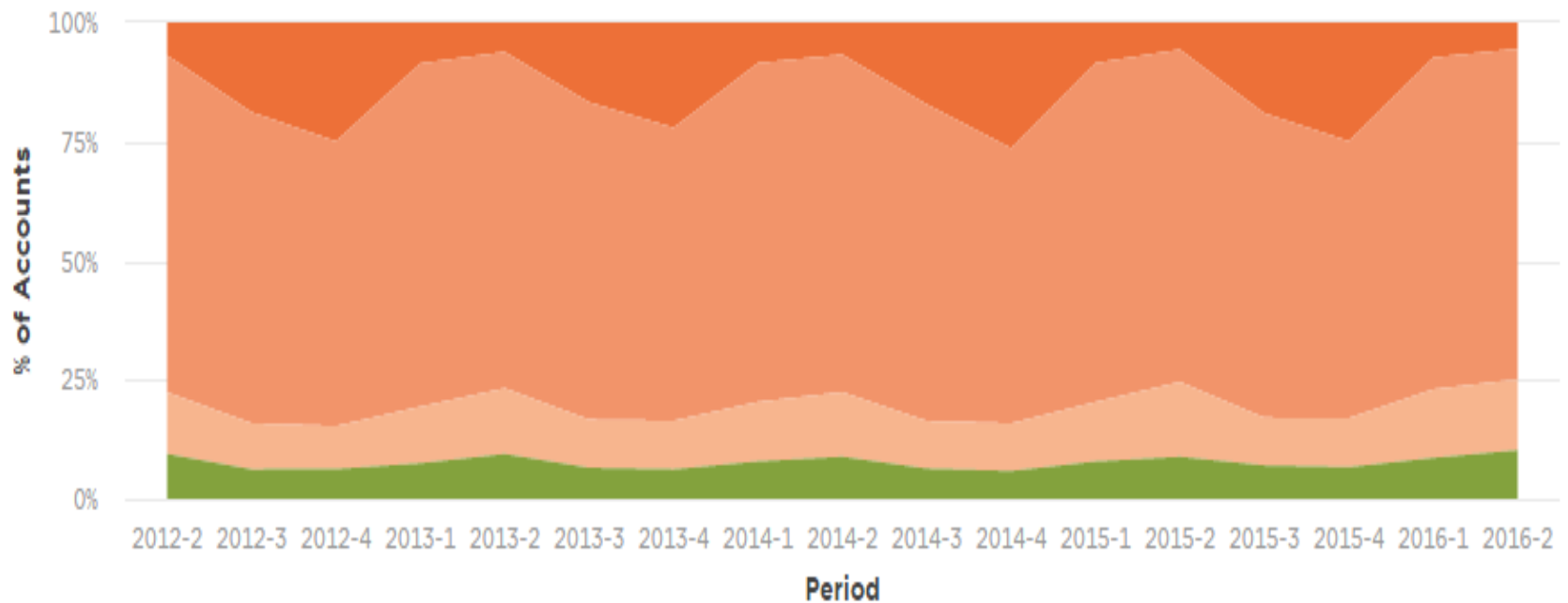
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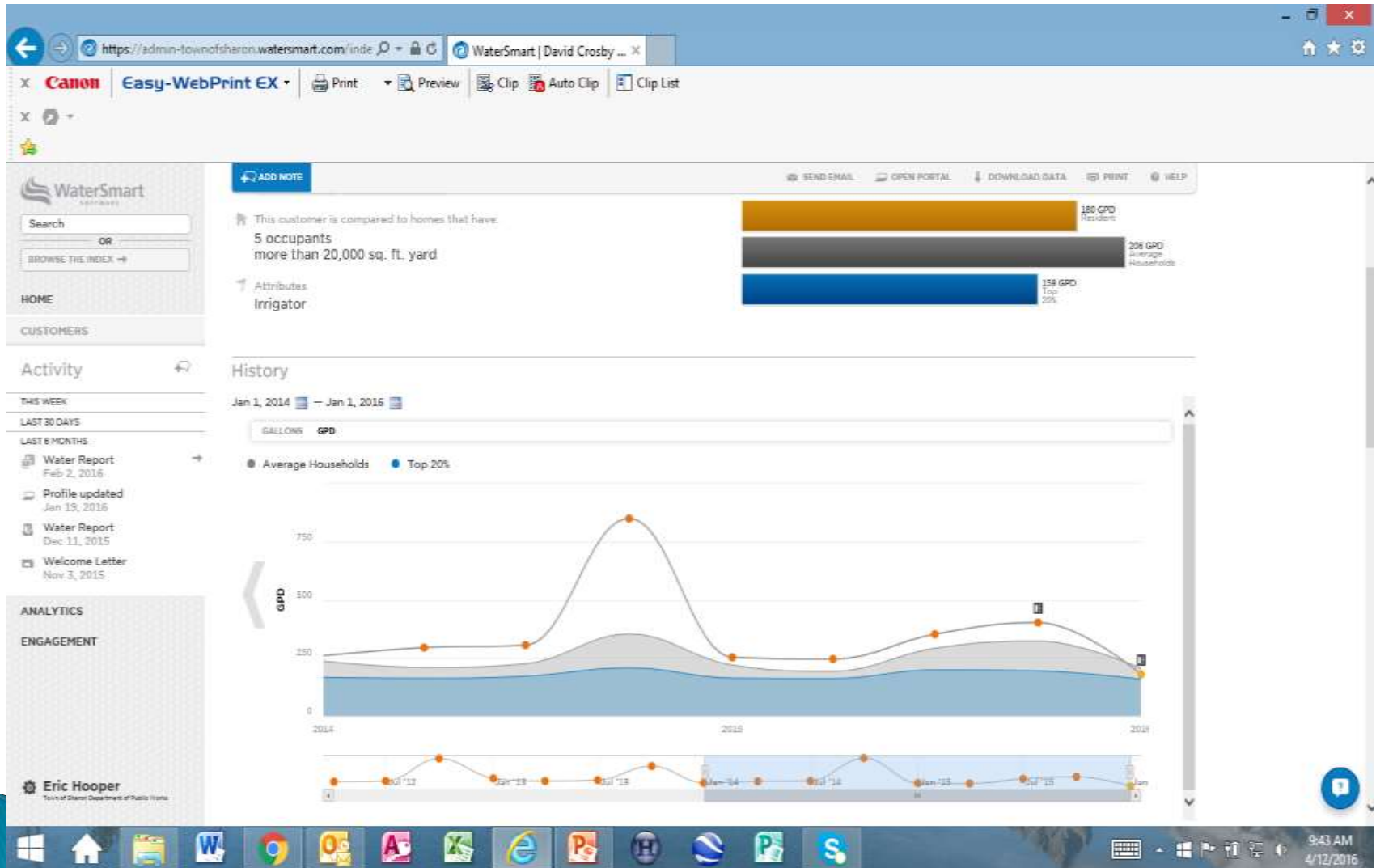


Money Talks: Getting Buy-in

- ▶ Contests: Toilet Mascot Naming
Easy, low cost, fun, prize
- ▶ Bill abatements and fee waivers
Easy, relatively low cost, significant information return



Tracking Personal Data



Messaging

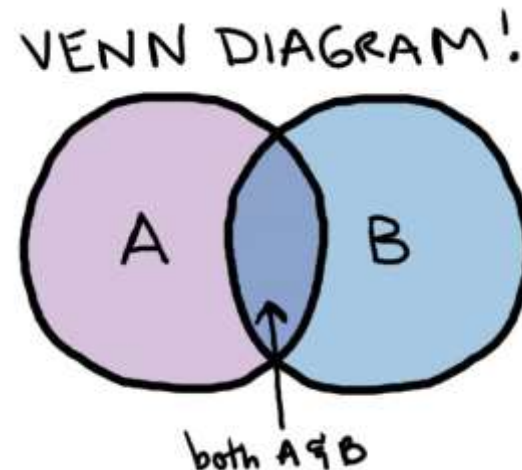
➤ Social Media:
A presence on the Web

- YouTube
- Facebook
- Web Sites



Expanding the Message: Conservation can't be the only purpose or use.

- ▶ House Age + Winter Water Use = Candidate for Toilet Replacement Rebate
- ▶ House Age + Building Permit Record = Potential Water Quality Issues



Targeting the Message: Delivering the right message at the right time to each customer



Group Messenger Module

Targeted

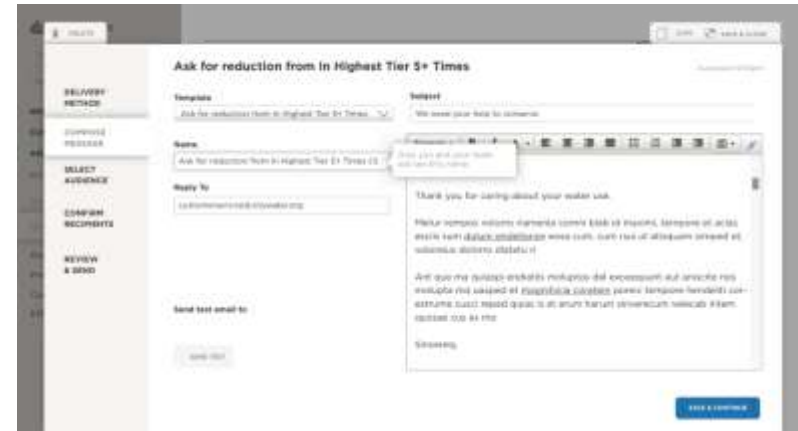
- Segment recipients

Fast

- Send personalized messages to select recipients via preloaded or newly created message templates

Integrated

- Customer interactions recorded centrally



Lessons Reinforced



- ▶ Message get stale quickly – People are getting tired of hearing about ultra–low flow toilets.
- ▶ Traditional message outlets and approaches do not allow for the message to be refreshed easily or timely. Social media may be better.
- ▶ Targeted messaging – don’t send ultra–low flow toilet rebate information to someone who has already replaced their toilets.
- ▶ Water Department as “messenger” may not be best unless the Department has someone versed in Public Outreach.
- ▶ Money talks: contests, bill abatements, incentives to “sign up”.
- ▶ Expanding the message: assisting Environmental Advocacy groups in Conservation outreach is not and should not be the core mission of any Water Department.

Questions?



Eric R. Hooper, P.E.
Superintendent of Public Works
Town of Sharon
Department of Public Works
ehooper@townofsharon.org
781-784-1525 ext. 2311