

January 24, 2013

## **FairPoint submission for the Vermont Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Forty-seven percent of Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation, as opposed to 27 percent nationally, according to Idle-Free VT. Reduction of unnecessary idling would have a positive impact on reducing Vermont's pollution impact.

Prolonged exposure of these emissions affects our respiratory systems, including our lungs and heart. Children, the elderly, and individuals with asthma are especially vulnerable. Vermont does not escape these exposures. In fact, Vermont has the highest rate of adult asthma in the nation, Idle-Free VT reports.

FairPoint Communications partnered with the American Lung Association and Idle-Free VT to reduce the idling of its northern New England fleet. After presentations at company garages in Vermont on the benefits of reducing idling, FairPoint expanded the effort across Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. FairPoint saw its total idling time drop more than 30 percent from the first 11 months of 2011 as compared to same months of 2012.

FairPoint operates approximately 1,200 fleet trucks across Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

### **GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

FairPoint installed GPS technology in all of its vehicles in 2010 and was able to fully calculate its true idle time for the first time. FairPoint measured the actual hours of idle time per vehicle and determined the average idle time was 92 hours per vehicle in the first quarter of 2011.

From both environmental and operating expense standpoints, FairPoint sought to lower its idling time per vehicle and operator.

FairPoint produced reports at the vehicle level, identifying outliers, who were then addressed individually and collectively. Rather than take a "punitive" approach of "no idling," the message was "limit unnecessary idling."

Additionally, FairPoint partnered with the American Lung Association and Wayne Michaud, executive director of Idle-Free VT, who visited Vermont garages to lead workshops on idling and to educate employees about health and pollution dangers associated with unnecessary vehicle idling. The outreach and subsequent communications were part of an overall employee initiative that included statistics on total idle time and was directed all drivers on steps they could take. Mr. Michaud also supplied training materials to FairPoint for its use with other locations both in Vermont and Maine and New Hampshire. These trainings were conducted at company garages and central offices as part of FairPoint's overall continuing employee training.

Additionally, FairPoint removed older vehicles from the fleet and replaced them with those that have better fuel efficiency.

The company-wide effort to reduce idling meets a number of environmental goals, both here in Vermont and across the region:

- Helps to reduce Vermont's fossil fuel consumption. When a vehicle is left idling, it consumes an average of one gallon of gas each hour. More widespread reductions in idling would allow Vermonters to save millions of gallons of fuel.
- Helps to achieve Vermont's statutory goals of significantly reducing Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change.
- Helps to curb polluting exhaust fumes that are damaging to public health by reducing air pollution and improving air quality.

FairPoint also has embarked on other energy-saving initiatives, including installation of motion-sensor lighting. FairPoint maintains hundreds of buildings and garages across Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

#### **MEASURABLE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:**

As stated previously, FairPoint measured the actual hours of idle time per vehicle and determined the average idle time was 92 hours per vehicle in the first quarter of 2011. By the fourth quarter of 2012, idling was reduced to a low of 54 hours per vehicle. The average amount of gas attributed to idling dropped from 80 gallons in Q1 of 2011 to 47 gallons in Q4 of 2012 – for total reductions of more than 40 percent.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, the idling reductions save 288 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, or the equivalent of taking 72 passenger vehicles off the road.

#### **INNOVATION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND/OR PARTNERSHIP:**

FairPoint's installation of GPS technology in its vehicles allowed for truer calculations of idling and the costs associated with idling.

Wayne Michaud, in his roles at the American Lung Association and Idle-Free VT, was instrumental in the success of FairPoint's anti-idling initiative. Michaud's discussions with employees on the environmental and health problems associated with idling helped galvanize behavior change. The partnership proved how organizations can work together to solve environmental challenges.

FairPoint's anti-idling initiative is one that will continue to have benefits – environmentally and financially – here in Vermont and elsewhere the company does business. It is a model of cooperation with a nonprofit organization that can be replicated with other companies in Vermont and elsewhere. Indeed, in extensive media coverage of the initiative, FairPoint heard from industry trade publications such as *Automotive Fleet*, and environmental media, including the well-respected Department of Energy's *National Idling Reduction Network News*, published by the Argonne National Laboratory.

**TRANSFERABILITY:**

As discussed previously, the success of the trainings at Vermont locations prompted FairPoint to roll out the idling reduction initiative to New Hampshire and Maine. FairPoint's experience with this initiative is a compelling example to other companies with large fleets. And there is no doubt that behavior change at work can influence behavior change at home. All of our drivers drive personal vehicles, and the trainings obviously made individuals aware of their own personal contributions to idling, and ways they could reduce them on their own. The awareness and choice to reduce idling is not only something they are doing at work, but it is something they can do at home and pass on to family, friends, and co-workers who were not in the trainings. The transferability of this initiative is truly greater than we can measure within FairPoint operations.

**COST AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS:**

The reduction in the number of idling hours per vehicle is estimated to have saved FairPoint 30 percent in fuel purchases, down from \$1.1 million in 2011 to \$782,000 in 2012 (based on an average cost per gallon of \$3.84).

**ADVANCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:**

Through FairPoint's partnership with the American Lung Association and Idle-Free Vermont, employees learned firsthand about the environmental health issues associated with idling. And again, since idling is also something our individual employees can improve upon with their personal vehicles, there is little doubt that this education was passed on outside the company to some degree.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

Please see attached summary of news clips.