

## Chico U.S.A. Clean Creeks Project Media Outreach Strategy

The results of the Chico USA public knowledge survey indicate that television, local newspapers, magazines, radio and the Internet are the public's media preferences through which to receive information on local environmental issues and home maintenance. While the Internet and radio are relatively inexpensive, the other choices are more expensive methods of outreach. Only 10 to 15% of survey respondents indicated that they prefer to get information on local environmental issues and home maintenance from brochures. This indicates that resources originally allocated for mass printings of brochures will have to be re-budgeted to reflect public preferences. The majority of outreach will be done through television, the daily newspaper (articles, PSAs and ads), radio PSAs, billboards/murals, the internet and promotional items.

Outreach content has been developed based on public knowledge needs indicated in results of the survey:

- Only one-third of the survey respondents knew that storm water runs into local creeks and streams without being treated by conventional treatment methods. Although 82% of the survey respondents knew that urban runoff pollution is carried to local creeks and streams, they did not know how it happens.
- Only half of the survey respondents are aware that cigarette butts on the ground contribute to pollution of local creeks and streams.
- An overwhelming majority of survey respondents who wash their cars at home, do so in their driveways or in the street. Only 5% wash their cars on the lawn.
- One-fourth of survey respondents apply pesticides to their lawns and gardens.
- While many respondents knew that home lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides are polluting creeks and streams, one-third of them did not associate pet waste with water contamination, and nearly half of the survey respondents are not aware that soil and green waste are harmful to local creeks and streams.

Significant numbers of Chico residents are unaware that stormwater is not treated by conventional treatment methods before entering local creeks and streams. Information about where and how stormwater enters our local creeks and streams is a pivotal message that must be relayed through the educational outreach efforts.

Since the majority of the public is unaware of their personal impact on the quality of the water in local creeks and streams through their household-generated urban runoff pollution, the individual's impact should be emphasized in the media campaign; hence the slogan, "If it's in your gutter, it's in your creek."

The media campaign should educate the public about the contribution of automobile products, and emphasize the harmful impact of yard and garden chemicals, cigarette litter, pet waste, soil and green waste runoff. Better management practices of car washing behaviors should also be emphasized. The campaign should educate the public about the importance of washing cars at a commercial car wash, or if at home, on the lawn, and encourage the public to hire Clean Water Business Partners to clean their carpets and maintain their lawns and gardens.

The following target audiences will be reached through media sources listed below:

- Cross tabulations of survey data indicate that the best media sources through which to convey information to the following groups of people are as follows: Full-time employees (which make up nearly half of survey respondents) – Television, radio and billboards; Retired, Disabled, Unemployed, and Stay-at-home parents – Newspaper; Students – Internet.

The public's rating of their own knowledge of local water quality indicates a public awareness of the need for more information and education:

- Just over one-fourth of respondents stated that they are not knowledgeable about local water issues, and over half of the respondents stated that they are only somewhat knowledgeable. Just over one-tenth of survey respondents think that they are knowledgeable about local water issues, and ONLY 5% think that they are very knowledgeable.

## **Media Outreach Outline**

### Posters

5 posters are in development. Each poster is designed to address a different urban runoff pollution issue: Recycle used oil; Clean up pet waste; Wash cars on the lawn or at commercial car washes; Reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides and never apply fertilizers and/or pesticides before rain is forecasted; Don't litter (with an emphasis on cigarette butts); and What is urban runoff pollution? Where does the runoff in our gutters go?

### Billboards/ Murals

Two of these posters will be selected as billboards, and will be displayed as a billboard advertisement in a prime location for 30 days each. A mural in a highly trafficked area of downtown Chico (both pedestrian and automobile traffic) will be created with the above listed messages integrated into the images and text. The City of Chico Storm water Management team is assisting with the selection of the location for the mural. A locally renowned artist has been hired to produce the mural. A portion of the billboard budget line item is being applied to the production of the mural. Chico is a town that is receptive to the arts, and the longevity of a mural message, as opposed to a 30 day billboard advertisement, will have an effective impact on the public's awareness of urban runoff pollution prevention methods.

### Promotional Materials

A 4 x7 magnet is in development to be handed out at the Chico USA booth during public presentations. The magnet will contain an image from one of the posters for visual consistency and repetition of the message.

1,000 reusable shopping bags with an integrated stuff-sack that fits in your pocket or purse are in production, and will be handed out as promotional materials at the Chico USA booth. The bags will be printed with the Chico USA logo on the bag and the stuff-sack, and filled with urban runoff pollution prevention educational materials (the magnet, a brochure, a survey, etc.) Reusable shopping bags are an excellent promotional item, as plastic bags are a serious urban runoff pollution issue. Many plastic bags find their way, as litter, into the waterways and the fish and aquatic life eat the bags and die. Plastic shopping bags are not biodegradable, but rather break down by a photo degrading process, which makes them a huge problem. For the Chico USA promotional outreach strategy, we are offering a solution that carries our message. The City of Chico is splitting the cost of the production of the reusable bags for the Chico USA booth. The use of the Recycle Used Oil logo allows for the City to use the recycle used oil grant funds to pay

for half of the cost of the bags. Recycling used oil is an important part of our urban runoff pollution prevention campaign, and it is an appropriate fit for the project and the message. The bags will be delivered at the end of January, and will be available to hand out at the booth in February, 2006.

#### Television PSA

One 2 minute, and one 30 second TV PSA are in production for the Chico USA, *Clean Creeks Project* urban runoff pollution prevention campaign. The PSAs will contain the themes listed for the posters, and will illustrate the journey of stormwater runoff to our creeks. The PSAs will be completed by January 31, 2006. The 2 minute PSA will be shown at the presentation scheduled for February 13, 2006 (See Booth Presentations below for info on this event.) The 30 second PSA will be aired throughout the year on local television stations. The City of Chico will assist with obtaining air time.

#### Booth Presentations and Public Events

Booth presentations are scheduled for the Saturday morning Farmers' Market in Chico (beginning this fall) at the end of January. The City of Chico, Storm water Management Program personnel is handling the booth reservation arrangements.

A booth presentation, and premiere showing of the Chico USA TV PSA, is planned for February 13, 2006, as part of a promotional event that will be aired on Channel 11, Access Television. The event is a mock game show called "The Price is Tight," and features local issues and businesses. It is a promotional and educational event, through which prizes will be won and participants will be given the opportunity to deliver their televised public messages. The Chico USA, *Clean Creeks Project*, will have a 5 minute slot, during which the 2 minute TV PSA will be shown, and City employees, BEC members and other Chico USA partners will deliver a 5 to 10 second urban runoff pollution prevention message, beginning with, "If it's in your gutter, it's in your creek!" The remainder of the time slot will be used for showing excerpts from the "Water Down the Drain" educational and entertaining CD Rom, produced by the Center for Global Environmental Education, at Hamlin University (Copyright permission has been given for the showing of these excerpts.)

Booth presentations are also planned for the Thursday Night market in Spring, 2006, the Home and Garden Show on March 19-20, 2006, at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds, and the Endangered Species Faire (ESF) on May 6, 2006. The ESF is attended annually by 6,000 to 8,000 people, and is a popular environmental education event for school age children and their families in Butte County.

A City wide storm drain marking event is planned for April 8, 2006. The Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE) program is partnering with the City of Chico, the Butte Environmental Council and the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance to sponsor this large-scale public awareness event. One meeting has been held with representatives from all partnering organizations for preliminary planning. The event will be covered by local television and newspaper media. Prizes will be given to volunteers, and a raffle will take place at the end of the event. The event will take place from 10 AM to 1 PM. Water and snacks will be provided for all volunteers.

#### Newspapers

One to two of the posters will be selected to run as newspaper ads. Press coverage will be pursued through articles submitted and PR for events and booth presentations.

#### Internet

The preliminary web page has been developed for the Chico USA, *Clean Creeks Project* and will be enhanced with higher quality design elements in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2006. The web page is

currently housed on the Butte Environmental website – [www.becnet.org](http://www.becnet.org) – and is accessed by clicking on the Chico USA logo. The goal for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, to establish a separate website for Chico USA is not feasible at this point in the project. The domain name has been purchased (chicousa.org) and discussion of how to create a separate website for Chico USA is in progress with the City of Chico. The design enhancements will promote internet outreach, and a separate website may be more feasible at a later phase.