

## How to cool vending costs

HRM looking at bylaw to require device that makes machines more energy efficient

By JUDY MYRDEN Business Reporter

JUST A FEW FEET away from the city's planning offices on the second floor of Alderney Gate in Dartmouth is a pop machine that is losing money because of electricity costs.

Running all day, every day, a vending machine uses a lot of energy.

It takes about \$500 worth of electricity a year to operate a vending machine, and the Alderney Gate machine sold about \$205 in sodas last year. In other words, Halifax Regional Municipality lost about \$317 by operating the machine, according to financial records.

"I'm betting that most people that have these machines plugged into their buildings don't realize that they're costing them over \$500 a year to provide that service," said Richard MacLellan, manager of HRM's sustainable environment management office, on Friday.

Of the 49 machines in HRM buildings, ferry terminals and recreation centres, only 14 generate over \$600 of revenue each year, said Mr. MacLellan.

Last year, HRM conducted a test on 30 of its 49 vending machines. The machines were installed with a new energy control device called Vending Miser.

The \$250 device and control box shuts down the machine when nobody is near, saving energy without altering the temperature or quality of the refreshments. This saves between 40 and 50 per cent of the electricity to run the unit, said Mr. MacLellan.

"With escalating energy costs, it's responsible to look at energy efficiency projects both through an environmental and financial lens," he said.

"It saves everybody money and it helps meet community greenhouse gas reduction efforts."

He said there are an estimated 2,000 refrigerated vending machines in HRM, and another 1,000 electrified machines for chips and chocolate bars.

"What we're looking at doing (is) actually pushing it out as a bylaw revision so all pop machines, not just the 49 we are paying the electricity for, but the 3,000 machines across the municipality, have these units on them," he said.

The potential electricity savings would be about \$500,000 a year and a reduction in pollution, he said.

HRM is proposing when a company comes in to renew its annual vending licence, the fee will increase from \$55 to the range of \$200 to \$250, depending on the cost of the Vending Miser, for a one-time charge that includes the device.

"Hopefully, there won't be any need to fine people," he said.

Fines under this bylaw may range from \$100 to \$2,000.

Mr. MacLellan said he expects support from prominent vending companies like Pepsi and Coca-Cola, but there is a hitch.

"The tickly thing with the bylaw revision is obviously the cost to buy the units would be to the people who put the vending machines in," he said.

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