



## 2017 Updated Sustainability & Communications Strategy

November 24, 2016

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## Executive Summary

This document provides Saint John Energy's framework to deepen engagement with internal and external stakeholders, through continuously improving the lines of communication.

The goal is to "Have stakeholders be informed of the utility's priorities, operations, future direction and feel engagement and pride in Saint John Energy as a premier provider of energy, excellent service and value in Saint John – a hallmark in our community."

To achieve relevance, simplicity and memorability, all communications will be shared through a Sustainability lens, aligning with industry standards. The **3 Sustainability Pillars** are Environmental, Social and Economic.

**10 Sustainability Focus Areas** will help Saint John Energy fulfil its Sustainability commitments. These include: Reliability, Competitive Rates, Energy Conservation, Environmental Stewardship, Community Investment, Stakeholder Engagement, Accountability, Employee Relations, Safety, and Productive Partnerships.

The tones of our communications are humble but confident, with a focus on both sharing relevant information and active listening. All communications are professional and polished without appearing flashy or overdone, language friendly and accessible. While Saint John Energy references its over 90-year history in Saint John as an indicator of its deep roots and commitment to the community, communications are forward-looking, positioning Saint John Energy as a progressive, innovative organization that is always seeking to learn and improve, always seeking to be better.

## Introduction

Saint John Energy (SJE) has been serving customers in Saint John for more than 90 years with highly competitive energy rates, high levels of reliability and excellent customer service. We have increased the level of knowledge about the utility, its priorities and operations with stakeholders over the past three years through stakeholder proactive communication and engagement. Saint John Energy also has framed its communications through a social responsibility or sustainability lens, as a further demonstration of balance and alignment with the Saint John community's values. For the Saint John Energy team, this is an important attribute to being a well-managed, best-practice organization that places accountability, openness and transparency as priorities.

### Strategic Guideposts:

<b>Vision Statement</b>	To be recognized as an evolving energy and utility leader
<b>Mission Statement</b>	We provide innovative customer-centered energy and utility solutions
<b>Motto</b>	Excellence in Energy Solutions
<b>Strategic Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Financial Stability / Sustainability</li><li>○ Customer Focus</li><li>○ Organizational Effectiveness</li><li>○ Employee Well-Being</li></ul>
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Safety</li><li>○ Results Driven</li><li>○ Accountability</li><li>○ Honesty, Integrity and Respect</li><li>○ Customer-Focused</li><li>○ Teamwork</li></ul>

## Goals & Objectives

### *Goal*

**Have stakeholders feel engagement and pride** in Saint John Energy as a **premier provider of energy, excellent service and value** in Saint John. Trust that Saint John Energy is working to update aging infrastructure, be an advocate of customer choice to provide innovation and cost-effective ways to keep the lights on.

### *Objectives*

1. **Enhance and protect the reputation** of Saint John Energy as an organization that is reliable, well managed, customer-focused, and beneficial to all of its stakeholders and in alignment with community values. **Continue to communicate our branding to all stakeholders**
2. **Increase internal and external stakeholder knowledge** about **the utility, its priorities and operations**. How it provides value to employees, customers, the City of Saint John and our community.
3. **Enhance employee engagement**; refresh communication strategy with specific targets for employee awareness.
  - a. proactive and frequent communications
  - b. involve employees in new initiatives
  - c. visibly post metrics of business performance
4. Continue to create **informed, engaged ambassadors** of Saint John Energy.
5. Continue to engage and **enhance relationships with elected and government officials**.
6. Create **communication materials for new business opportunities**.

## Target Audiences

Target audiences are presented below, categorized as either internal or external. While the core messages remain consistent across all audiences, internal audiences will typically receive more frequent communications with a greater degree of detail at times. Also, internal audiences always receive information for broad public dissemination *first*, considering they are part of the Saint John Energy family and are in a position to be ambassadors for the utility.

### Internal

- Employees
  - Senior Management Team
  - Managers and Supervisors
  - Unionized
  - Non-Unionized
- Union Leaders
- Pensioners
- Board of Directors
- City of Saint John
  - Mayor and Common Council
  - City Staff with Direct SJE Relationships (e.g. City Manager, Planning Department, City Engineering,)
  - City Staff in General

## External

- Customers
  - Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
- Partners
  - NB Power
  - Perth-Andover Electric Light Commission
  - Edmundston Energy
- Saint John-based stakeholder groups, such as:
  - Enterprise Saint John (and the broader True Growth Network)
  - The Chamber
  - Uptown Saint John
  - Port Saint John
  - Saint John Development Corporation
  - Saint John Industrial Parks
  - Discover Saint John
  - Saint John Hotel Association
  - UNB Saint John / NBCC Saint John
  - Saint John Regional Hospital and Saint Joseph's Hospital
- Beneficiaries of sponsorship and donations program
  - Local charities
- Energy and Utilities Board of New Brunswick
- Province of New Brunswick
  - Department of Energy and Resource Development
  - Department of Public Safety
  - Department of Environment
- Canadian Electricity Association
- Atlantica Centre for Energy
- News media
  - Saint John
  - Province of New Brunswick / regional
  - Trade (e.g. Progress Magazine, Atlantic Business Magazine)

## Strategic Approach

- The social responsibility and communications approach is relevant, simple, memorable and achievable.
- To achieve relevance, simplicity and memorability, the Saint John Energy story should be told and reinforced by describing it through its Sustainability focus. The Sustainability Framework will categorize the key attributes and subject areas that are important to all stakeholders.
- Saint John Energy provides mechanisms to both tell the Saint John Energy story, and engage stakeholders – giving stakeholders an opportunity to share feedback and participate in meaningful ways. Meaningful engagement is important. Saint John Energy acts on good feedback that aligns with the utility’s big-picture goals.
- The tone of communications, engagement and overall implementation of this plan -humble but confident, with a focus on both sharing relevant information and listening. All communications are professional and polished without appearing to be flashy or overdone, and it should consistently reflect Saint John Energy’s reputational aspirations. Language should be friendly and accessible, and not riddled with corporate or industry jargon.
- While Saint John Energy reference’s its 90-year+ history in Saint John as an indicator of its deep roots and commitment to the community, communications should be forward-looking, positioning Saint John Energy as a progressive, innovative organization that is always looking to learn and improve, always seeking to be better.

## Sustainability Framework

The three interrelated pillars of Sustainability typically include simply: **Environmental**, **Social** and **Economic**. Saint John Energy then layers in key initiatives and measurement areas that support each of these three main pillars, as most appropriate to the business.

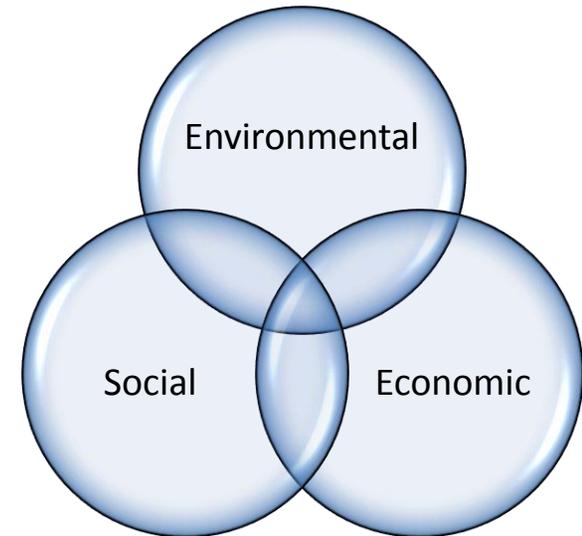
**At Saint John Energy, we are committed to:**

**The Environment:** *We will reduce our environmental footprint today and in the future – and we will help our customers do the same through the promotion of energy conservation.*

**Social Responsibility:** *We respect our shareholder in the City of Saint John, and all of our customers, employees, partners and other stakeholders. We are committed to communicating with and engaging our stakeholders, and investing in our community.*

**Delivering Economic Value:** *We will provide economic value to our community through the reliable supply of energy at highly competitive rates, the promotion of energy conservation, and our dedication to helping Saint John grow and prosper.*

Through the **10 Sustainability Focus Areas** Saint John Energy demonstrates how it contributes to its stakeholders and community – with consistency and resonance, year over year. Many of these areas align with more than one pillar, which is why it is displayed in a matrix.



## 10 Sustainability Focus Areas

Sustainability Focus Area	Environmental	Social	Economic	Notes
1. Reliability	x	x	x	Includes maintaining <b>high reliability standards</b> and <b>proactively communicating to customers about any power disruptions</b> (planned and unplanned)
2. Competitive Rates		x	x	Includes charging <b>competitive rates</b> , and communicating the benefit of Saint John Energy's rates with context (considering partner relationships)
3. Energy Conservation	x	x	x	Includes helping customers know how to <b>reduce energy consumption</b> and save money, both short term and long term
4. Environmental Stewardship	x	x	x	Includes the work undertaken through the Environmental Management System and compliance with <b>ISO 14001</b>
5. Community Investment		x	x	Includes <b>corporate giving</b> on the part of Saint John Energy, and the promotion of <b>employee giving and volunteerism</b> in our community
6. Stakeholder Engagement	x	x	x	Includes employees, customers, the City of Saint John, community stakeholders. Key community initiatives; Community AGM and Annual Report
7. Accountability		x	x	Includes financial excellence, good governance practices, infrastructure management, risk management, transparency
8. Employee Relations	x	x	x	Includes efforts to communicate with, <b>engage</b> , train and protect <b>employees</b> , and further build a sense of community
9. Safety		x	x	Includes leading and managing <b>safety practices</b> for employees, and promoting relevant safety practices among customers, partners and suppliers, and members of the general public
10. Productive Partnerships	x	x	x	Includes Saint John Energy's contribution to <b>policy development and implementation</b> in partnership with others, and its general approach to being a good partner for the greater good

## The Application of the Focus Areas

The 10 focus areas tell the Saint John Energy story and provide the full picture of the value provided to the City of Saint John, ratepayers, partners and the whole community. The four overarching strategic themes – financial stability and sustainability, customer focus, organizational effectiveness, and employee wellbeing is how we package initiatives, alignment with our key performance indicators, and develop communication strategies. We report on our progress by using these overarching headings when assembling the quarterly and annual reports, developing strategic plans, presenting at stakeholder meetings, create infographics or updates to our website.

## Key Messages

The following narrative depicts the tone and language Saint John Energy uses to describe its role in the Saint John community and its overall approach to doing business.

- Saint John Energy is proud to provide the people of Saint John with the power they need to heat their homes, run their businesses and fuel industrial growth. It's a job we have been doing since 1922.
- We provide value to all our stakeholders, from our shareholder in the City of Saint John and employees, to customers, partners and community leaders. We do this through a focus on sustainability, which encompasses our commitment to the environment, social responsibility and delivering economic value.
- Saint John Energy's rates are among the lowest in our region. On average, residential rates are 10% lower and commercial rates are 4% lower than others in the province. This is possible thanks to the excellent relationship we have with NB Power, our supplier of wholesale electricity. It is also possible because we serve a very specific, urban geographic area, which creates efficiencies across the board for us. This model has allowed the City of Saint John to save about \$2 million per year, and the public more than \$7 million per year. This benefits Saint John, and our province as a whole.
- Saint John Energy remains ahead of the national average in reliable service, minimizing system interruptions as much as possible. Maintaining high reliability averages – and doing so safely – is job one. We achieve this through teamwork, our top-rate infrastructure and our unwavering focus on the customer.

- We are passionate about energy conservation, in the interest of saving our ratepayers money and helping to safeguard precious energy resources well into the future. We pursue energy conservation solutions in partnership with others in our industry and community, and individually as an organization committed to doing right by our customers.
- We are invested in the community of Saint John. We want to help our community prosper by giving back through time, financial support and leadership.
- We are accountable to the City of Saint John, our employees, ratepayers and community. We are committed to openness, transparency and active listening.

## Recommendations

### Energy Conservation

1. Continue to communicate energy conservation information and tips in Saint John Energy’s communications (website - savings tip, twitter, Facebook, home show, school visits). Information and tips are of high value to readers, and easy to understand. A seasonal inventory and schedule of information and tips for social media application are a part of the energy conservation initiative.

### Community Investment

2. Continue to aim Saint John Energy’s corporate investment budget to help address social need in Saint John. The three areas of social need encompass:
  1. **Education** – Scholarships and programs to help students in financial need to achieve success at school and continue their education (\$25,000 annual target)
  2. **Community-Building** – Support to organizations like the YMCA, United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters, True Growth 2.0, who have a broader mandate to help those in need in Saint John, by helping to build strong communities (\$50,000 annual target)
  3. **Food & Warm Shelter** – Support to charities that have as a part of their mandate a goal to address the more day-to-day need of warm shelter and support like Hospice Greater Saint John, First Steps, Saint John Food Banks, Rocmaura Nursing Home, and Crescent Valley Resource Centre Food Programs (\$40,000 annual target)

It is important to communicate information about Saint John Energy's community investment approach (e.g. Social Media). This communication is about accountability, transparency and demonstrating that we are an active citizen in our city. *\*When employees are involved in SJE's community investments it increases employee engagement.*

## Stakeholder Engagement

### **3. Continue Saint John Energy presence in social media.**

Social media is where many members of the public spend their time communicating and forming opinions – people like your customers.

- **Twitter** – Twitter is used to communicate **time-sensitive, newsy information**, like power interruptions (planned and unplanned) and event-related information. *Begin to use twitter to open the one-on-one conversation with users to find out more about how they communicate during outages.*
- **Facebook** – Facebook is used to engage with audiences about energy conservation, as a means to share other corporate information in ways that provide value to others, and as a way to celebrate successes that matter to the community. Offer customer contests and reduce energy consumption ideas.
- **YouTube** – Short, informative videos as part of the website, and promoted on Twitter and Facebook. The videos are on YouTube and to be continued by packaging them on a YouTube channel as more are created. *Videos are shared 4x more in social media.*
- **Instagram** – Online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share on social networking platforms.
- **Educate internal stakeholders** on the guidelines of social media. Just like our public they are using social media to communicate, education will help them form a correct positive messaging, decrease their fear and increase our social media outreach.

### **4. Distribute a corporate eNewsletter twice a year** - eNewsletters are an efficient and effective way to share information with a range of stakeholders. The eNewsletter features corporate news and information, in alignment with our 10 Sustainability Focus Areas, and offer opportunities to provide feedback. Stakeholders are able to sign up for the eNewsletter on our website's homepage.

### **5. Formal & Informal stakeholder engagement in the Saint John community, on the part of Saint John Energy's leaders.**

Like many small communities, personal relationships are the backbone of business and community-building. Saint John Energy's senior leadership and Board actively take part in the community through:

- Breakfast, lunch and coffee meetings with key community stakeholders and partners.
- Participation in community boards and committees, as appropriate to the person’s role and interests.
- Active leadership in the implementation of True Growth 2.0, through project management secondment, active participation at Network Partner meetings, enablement of growth from an infrastructure perspective, etc.
- Attendance at dinners and community events (e.g. Chamber mixers)
- Notes of congratulations to others in our community who achieve success.

**6. Ongoing practice of media relations**

Enhance relationships with the traditional mainstream media that serve Saint John – newspaper, radio and television and their websites.

Tailor the ongoing media relations program based on feedback received. Our ongoing approach to media relations will likely include:

- Adding key media contacts to stakeholder database for regular updates
- Regular dissemination of newsworthy news releases
- A refined mechanism for sharing information about power disruptions
- Occasional story pitches
- Occasional space in the commentary pages of the newspaper
- Media assistance in communicating news during issues or crises situations
- Informal relationship-building and requests for feedback to stay personally connected and grounded with the media

Accountability

**7. Continue to share strategy and business plan results with stakeholders and ensure to provide mechanisms for feedback.**

- Community AGM
- City Council sessions
- Annual Reports
- One-page infographics
- Cascading communication protocol

## **Employee Relations**

### **8. Continue with the cascading communications protocol, so that employees are always among the first to hear of important news and announcements.**

Our employees are the Saint John Energy family – they are our ambassadors and community spokespeople. When communicating information broadly among external audiences, it is critical to share it with employees first (with some level of segmentation, beginning with leaders). The method of communications will depend on the message – most of the time it will be through email; for more serious messages it could be through face-to-face communications.

- Ensure all communication provided is simple and repeatable to allow employees to pass the correct message to stakeholders – 3 sound bites.

### **9. Continue with quarterly and annual meetings**

Saint John Energy hosts quarterly meetings in the training room, and annual off-site meetings in June.

- Report quarterly business metrics -KPI's in these meetings to increase the awareness of how we measure our business targets and educate on how employees can do their part to improve those targets. The KPI's will be posted quarterly on the Watts Up board.
- Develop a feedback loop for these meetings to demonstrate active listening. Improve the feedback process by communicating the outcome of the feedback that was provided, e.g. "You said this in your feedback and we changed this...thank you."
- Continue with monthly lunch and learns with key topics of interest related to our business direction; e.g. energy trends within other utilities, innovation within our region.

### **10. Continue face-to-face time through informal leader walk-about**

Leader visibility and involvement in the business, if done from a place of goodwill and servitude, can be powerful tools to boost employee engagement. Leadership makes time to informally walk about and spend time with employees in their work environments, to learn about their jobs, ask questions and seek ideas to help improve the business. Leaders of one area pop in to see staff in another area, as a way to help break down silos and foster greater understanding of the whole business. They act on suggestions and keep employees posted.

### **11. Continue to celebrate successes**

Celebration of successes and employee recognition is tied to the 10 focus areas in the Sustainability Framework. Communication of the successes is done with internal (Manager Acknowledgements Process, Watts up Board) and external audiences (twitter, website, Facebook, eNewsletter and/or Annual Report). Always speak to the greater *value* these successes provide to the community.

- Develop program for employees to provide examples on where they or others have demonstrated our Guiding Principles – values in their day to day activities.

## Productive Partnerships

### **12. Continue to conduct quarterly face-to-face meetings with NB Power’s senior leaders.**

Senior leaders continue to take part in a quarterly meeting to discuss more strategic matters, and to help ensure overall alignment. Half of these meetings take place in Saint John, and half in Fredericton. Continue to use a semi-formalized approach to sharing feedback which will allow the organization permission to talk about this in a productive, relationship-oriented way.

### **13. Enhance the relationship with the Province of New Brunswick.**

Explore Corporate Structure alternatives that better serve the organizations Strategic Objectives including an enhanced relationship with the owner that drives higher and more visible value.

### **14. Enhance and define SJE’s relationship with the City**

Explore moving to a shareholder / dividend relationship with the City

### **15. Provide communications support for other key Saint John Energy Initiatives and Projects**

- a. New lines of business
- b. New energy supply options
- c. Communication plans for all projects (as required)

## Measurement

### Lead Measures (Indicators)

1. **Communication plans** 100% completed for all **infrastructure** projects.
2. **New lines of business** - Mini split communication plan completed by February 2017.
3. Two **eNewsletters** are developed – 1<sup>st</sup> eNewsletter by May 2016 and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dec 2016.
4. Saint John Energy can report at least six incidences where it has **acted on the feedback** of internal or external stakeholders, by the end of 2016.

### Lag Measures (Outcomes)

1. Define and implement specified initiatives and measures to enhance our **employee engagement** survey score.
2. Gather stakeholder feedback survey after the Saint John Energy Community AGM that demonstrates we are making positive progress in **increasing knowledge** about Saint John Energy's operations and the value it provides to Saint John, and overall approval of the utility.
3. Conduct a 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey and develop actions based on its results.

## Recommendations Summary

### Energy Conservation

1 Continue to communicate energy conservation information and tips in Saint John Energy's communications

### Community Investment

2 Continue to aim Saint John Energy's corporate investment budget to help address social need in Saint John

### Stakeholder Engagement

3 Continue Saint John Energy presence in social media.

4 Distribute corporate bi-annually eNewsletters

5 Formal & Informal stakeholder engagement in the Saint John community, on the part of Saint John Energy's leaders

6 Introduce an ongoing practice of media relations

### Accountability

7 Continue to share strategy and business plan results with stakeholders and ensure to provide mechanisms for feedback

### Employee Relations

8 Continue with the cascading communications protocol, so that employees are always among the first to hear of important news and announcements

9 Continue with quarterly and annual meetings

10 Continue face-to-face time through informal leader walk-about

11 Continue to celebrate successes

### Productive Partnerships

12 Continue to conduct quarterly face-to-face meetings with NB Power's senior leaders

13 Enhance the relationship with the Province of New Brunswick

14 Enhance and define SJE's relationship with the City

15 Provide communications support for other key Saint John Energy Initiatives and Projects