

Application Enhancements (Pooled), p. 80 of 96, \$937,000

Q. In the report at Tab 6.1 2010 Application Enhancements, p. 4, NP mentions miscommunication with customers. How many customer complaints have been received in 2008 and to June 30, 2009 regarding misinterpretation of financing terms or the finance plan balance?

A. The miscommunication referred to primarily relates to bill presentation. In circumstances where a customer that participates in a finance plan does not fully pay a monthly bill, the next month's bill displays finance plan balances in a manner that is open to misinterpretation.

Take as an example a customer that has a \$250 bill which indicates \$200 for electricity service and \$50 for a finance plan. If that customer pays \$175 on the \$250 bill, the customer's next bill will show a \$75 previous balance owing. But the finance plan balances shown on that next bill will *not* clearly indicate the amounts outstanding for the finance plan as of the date of that bill.

This presentation stems from the underlying computing architecture, or functionality, of the Customer Service System ("CSS") that, in effect, assumes that all finance plan payments will be made as billed. When a partial bill payment is made, the current CSS architecture does not permit outstanding finance balances to be more clearly reflected on the bill.

To date, this issue has been dealt with through the routine Company response to customer inquiries. Customer service agents have the appropriate information at hand to provide finance plan balances for customers on such inquiries. The response to inquiries from bill presentation related to finance plans typically provides customers with the information necessary to understand the current status of their finance plan balance.

Program inquiries, which include all finance plans and conservation inquiries, accounted for a total of 18,805 customer inquiries for the period January 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. The Company does not specifically track customer inquiries related to finance plans but expects a relatively small proportion of total program inquiries are related to finance plans. The Company does not segregate *inquiries* and *complaints* for tracking purposes.

Over the past year, Newfoundland Power has launched an increased number of customer energy conservation programs. This is expected to increase the number of customers participating in Company finance plans. In light of this, the Company intends to address this known deficiency of CSS related to finance plan billing. This work will enable customers' bills to clearly indicate finance plan balances in circumstances where monthly bills are not fully paid.