

Taking the message to the check stand



PROVIDED BY NV ENERGY

Ad messages appear on a check-out conveyor belt in a Scolari's supermarket. It is part of a new advertising campaign by NV Energy Inc. to promote saving energy.

New form of conveyor-belt advertising appears at local Scolari's grocery stores

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Scolari's Food & Drug Co. of Northern Nevada had a new look at its check stands recently.

The supermarket introduced a new form of advertising at its check-out stands over the final few months of 2009. The quick tips from NV Energy Inc. on how to save energy appeared on conveyor belts where customers placed their items.

"The focus is to teach people that there are simple things to do to help reduce their energy use," said Andrea Smith, spokeswoman for NV Energy. "We noticed that the advertising did very well at the check stands."

Marketing manager John Stampli of Scolari's acknowledged the new conveyor belts brightened up his check stands.

"The checkers loved it," Stampli said.

The use of conveyor belt ads grabbed the attention of the consumer — they are hard to miss, and unconventional forms of advertising

are more inclined to draw the consumers' eye.

The difference is that Scolari's used NV Energy, and not a traditional grocery store product, on its belts. When consumers were placing their items down, they could read tips on how to save energy in their own homes. Some of the messages advised that keeping freezers full saves on cooling costs, others suggested that using smart light bulbs helps to save as well.

Alicia Rockwell, director of public affairs and communications for Save Mart Supermarkets, only has seen the use of grocery store conveyor belt ads in a few pilot stores in California. No Save Mart outlets in Northern Nevada have used the ads, but she does like the idea of offering consumer information.

"We have piloted maybe two stores in other areas in California with advertising on the belts," Rockwell said. "The use of consumer info has piqued my interest, but I'm not sure if we will pursue such advertising."

NV Energy enlisted the help of R&R

SEE CHECK-OUT ON 8A

'It's tough to measure the effectiveness of the ads, but quite a lot of people said it grabbed their attention.'

SHANNON DOHERTY ■ Senior account executive with R&R Partners

Check-out/Goal was to reach consumers who ignore media

From 7A

Partners, a full-service advertising agency, for its display. Senior account executive Shannon Doherty was on the project, and her agency ran in 60 stores statewide using NV Energy's consumer tips as advertisements on the belts.

"It's tough to measure the effectiveness of the ads, but quite a lot of people said it grabbed their attention," Doherty said. "We have heard a lot of people say they had seen them and that it was interesting."

NV Energy's goal was to reach customers who otherwise don't watch television, use the Internet or who aren't exposed to ads in other places. In addition to the conveyor belts, NV Energy also used an advertising method called

floor walk, where different images and messages were placed on the grocery store floor. They also used freezer cling, offering quick messages on grocery store freezers informing the customers how to save on energy in their homes.

This advertising could have been missed by some; Scolari's was the only Northern Nevada outlet to feature the conveyor belt ads. But Stampfli, of Scolari's, said the medium was effective his stores would consider using it again.

"I absolutely would consider using this advertising method again," Stampfli said. "Artwork and colors are important, and the message gets changed out every so often. It's all about advertising and brand awareness."