

Neighbours

A part of the community since 1965 • Volume 10 • Number 1 • Spring 2004

Durham hits new heights

University, college and OPG forge future for the Region



Dr. George Bereznai, dean of the School of Energy Engineering and Nuclear Science stands above the computer common shared by the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) and Durham College. The two educational institutes at the North Oshawa campus have programs geared to addressing a predicted shortage in skilled nuclear engineers, operators and technicians.

What every community wants is knowledge-based, rewarding employment opportunities close to home to end the commuter rat race and fuel the local economy.

In a symbiotic relationship filled with promise for Durham's future, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) are delivering those opportunities to the residents of this region.

In the fall of 2003, UOIT opened its doors and invited the first 100 students to the School of Energy Engineering and Nuclear Science, within the new research-intensive, high-technology science and business-oriented university. Those graduates will provide the nuclear industry and OPG with the largest-ever graduating class in Canada of specifically trained nuclear-based engineers. It will provide Ontario with the skilled workers it needs to run our generators and Durham with a significant brain-gain and economic infusion as these students take jobs within our community. And, says the program's dean, Dr. George Bereznai, it will save company's the cost of training that the government-owned company would have to provide if the university did not. "They're much more

job-ready," to begin producing on the job from the day they report to work, he notes.

In its conception, the goal of UOIT was to provide an educated workforce of highly-trained "thinkers, leaders and doers" for knowledge-based industry where they are needed most, says the University's President Dr. Gary Polonsky. And at this point in time, one of Ontario's areas of greatest need is the energy sector. Here attrition due to impending baby boomer retirement is expected to cause a shortage of the highly-skilled workers needed to operate our nuclear plants and utilities in the coming years.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Nuclear Energy Institute in the United States, that country is anticipating nearly half of all jobs in the nuclear power generation sector will need to be filled in the next five years. According to Don McKinnon, President of the Canadian Power Workers Union, the statistics in Canada are similar.

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ONTARIO POWER
GENERATION



A Word from our Senior Vice President

Welcome to the spring issue of Pickering Neighbours. As many of you know, a lot has happened with both Pickering Nuclear and Ontario Power

Generation since my last note to you in December.

Following the release of a review on the return to service of Pickering A, which was led by the Honourable Jake Epp, a number of actions were taken by government. In addition to changing the management and board of OPG, one of those actions was the Minister of Energy's announcement of a special review team - the Manley Review Panel - to look into OPG's role in Ontario's electricity marketplace. Since then, OPG has been providing full support to this team, so that they have all the information they need to make the right decisions about OPG and the return to service of the three remaining Pickering A units.

As well, we have suspended work on Units 2 and 3 to concentrate all of our resources on a credible cost and schedule to return the next unit - Unit 1 - to service. The Manley Review Panel is expected to make their recommendations to government by mid-March.

In the meantime, we continue to safely operate Units 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 at Pickering, adding more than 2,050 megawatts of electricity capacity to Ontario's supply, and meeting the province's high demand for electricity through the recent cold weather. Other notable accomplishments of late include our safe work record. In February, Pickering Nuclear staff continued its excellent safety record by achieving more than 2.6 million hours without a lost time accident, surpassing the industry benchmark of one event per 200,000 hours worked.

Last year and to date this year, Pickering Nuclear has met and in many cases improved on environmental targets, including the recertification of our ISO 14001 environmental management system. In addition to safety, OPG continues its efforts to enhance security at its nuclear stations. Construction is well underway to build new security screening buildings at both Pickering and Darlington. These new facilities will improve screening efficiency, as well as house all security staff and the Durham Region Police, who provide armed security assistance on site.

And finally, the totals are in on our charity fundraising at the end of 2003. Pickering Nuclear staff, through payroll deductions and on-site events raised more than \$300,000 to help support Durham and Ontario charities and other worthwhile organizations.

As much as Pickering Nuclear has worked to give back to this community, we are equally thankful for the strong support we have received from you in return. You are our neighbours in every sense of the word. Our commitment to you is keeping you foremost in our minds as we move forward.

Pat McNeil
Senior Vice President
Nuclear Strategy and Support

continued from cover

The new university hopes to meet that challenge. "UOIT was based on a market study of what was needed in Ontario and in Durham in particular," says Dr. Bereznai. "This is the right program, in the right place at the right time."

Working in tandem with the university to address the need is Durham College, which for the past few years has been training nuclear technicians and technologists as well.

"There is so much high-level knowledge work," says Dr. Bereznai, and Durham will be the beneficiary when the supply and demand for those high-skill positions is in balance.

Unit 4 start-up highlights fourth quarter 2003

The restart of Unit Four of the Pickering A plant in 2003, following a five and a half-year shutdown for refurbishing was a Canadian first for a nuclear power station.

The work done is expected to improve both the production and lifespan of the reactor.

However, the restart, combined with another historic event, the grid failure and subsequent blackout across Ontario and parts of the United States, led to some challenges for the Pickering team. As a result, Pickering Nuclear's fourth quarter report card did include more reactor trips than target. Trips are a measure of when a reactor involuntarily shuts down. At the Pickering A, Unit 4, the trip rate was 7.2 incidents versus our target of two. The trips occurred as a result of operations to bring the unit back online after such a long shutdown. Meanwhile at Pickering B, including the grid failure in August, the rate was 1.78. Although this did not meet OPG's target of one trip for 7,000 hours of operation, it is still considered 'good' by worldwide industry standards.

Pickering continues to maintain a low emission of radiation from the plant to the environment bettering its target by half. Someone living at the fenceline of the station would only have received five microsieverts of radiation. The regulatory limit is 1,000 microsieverts and the average Canadian receives 2,000 microsieverts every year from natural background sources.

Pickering excelled with an industrial safety accident rate of zero for 2003 and no preventable major or moderate spills in the year. The utmost care in safety and environmental stewardship is our promise to you, our neighbours.

For more information on our quarterly reports, call (905) 837-7272 or go to our Web site at www.opg.com.

News in brief

On Feb. 11, a nuclear reactor at Pickering's A station returned to 100 per cent full power for the first time since April 1996.

In Dec. 1997, all four Pickering A units were shutdown for extensive refurbishment. Unit 4, the first unit to receive the necessary work to return to service, came back on line in 2003 with incremental increases in power until it was determined by Ontario Power Generation and the regulator, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, that the unit was ready to go to full power status. At 11:44 a.m. on Feb. 11, the unit achieved 100 per cent full power, producing 546 megawatts gross and 521 megawatts net.

OPG is grateful to the many staff whose continued commitment made the return of Pickering A, Unit 4 to service, safe and reliable.

A passion for knowledge

Learning is a way of life for nuclear operators

When Rhonda Rose was 11, her father built their family a wind-powered solar house in the Niagara Region that fuelled a passion for electricity within his daughter.

Before she had finished high school, Rhonda was already dreaming of taking her experience to working with what she saw as the most fascinating energy generation of all, nuclear power.

"We used to go to Rice Lake on weekends and we would pass Darlington as it was being built and my dad would say, 'Oh, look there's the nuclear plant,'" Rhonda recalls. Nuclear technology captured her imagination and continues to do so today, 12 years after she fulfilled her dream to begin work as a nuclear operator at the Darlington Generating Station.

The road from dream to reality has been one of lifelong learning for Rhonda who spent two years at the University of Western Ontario studying physics before entering Niagara College for an intensive 18-month course to get her third class stationary engineer licence and college diploma. As a co-op student at the Nanticoke thermal energy (coal) plant, Rhonda was offered a full-time job. But still her sights remained on the nuclear side of the energy sector. "I wanted to become an ANO (Authorized Nuclear Operator)," says Rhonda who continues to work toward the goal of one day standing at command central of the nuclear reactors - the control room. Rhonda's extensive nuclear training has never ended. Like all nuclear operators, she is expected to spend time every five weeks in a classroom, updating her skills. Despite the shift work, the complex demands of her job and the intense in-house training at OPG, Rhonda also completed courses for her university degree in her off-hours. It is all part of her commitment to her job and to herself. For Rhonda, a disciplined regime that nurtures mind, body and spirit are key to excellence on the job and in her life.



Nuclear Operator Chuck Lamers.

Chuck Lamers, 43, was no stranger to the concept of life-long learning when he became a nuclear operator at the Pickering Generating Station in 2002. With an agricultural degree from Guelph University and a Bachelor of Education from Queen's University, he had spent his life as both a student and a teacher in a variety of capacities before coming to OPG's public affairs department. When his 16-month contract was about to expire, he took an aptitude test to see what else he might be ideally suited for within OPG. "I really liked the com-

pany," he relates. His test showed a clear aptitude for an operator position and he has been working and training in the fuel handling division ever since. "I was very impressed with OPG's approach to training," says Chuck, who in his off-time continues to supply teach children in the community. OPG's training is "very hands on, theoretical and practical. You learn in the classroom then immediately apply it in the field. I was very, very impressed. It's linked, it's progressive.

"OPG has a structured training program but I can also direct my own learning program," he adds, noting there are frequent opportunities to learn new skills. "You are only limited by what you set as your own boundaries. The horizon just keeps getting broader."

OPG in the Community

Friendships that last a lifetime.

Our children are our future, which is why Ontario Power Generation is proud to be the lead sponsor of the Bowl for Kids Sake.

Our sponsorship role is just another step in our philosophy of putting our energy to good use in the communities of Durham.

Big Brothers and Sisters not only depend on funds raised through these events but more importantly - the involvement and interaction of committed volunteers.

In Durham there are many Little Brothers and Sisters who are in need of a Big Brother or Sister match or an in-school mentor. If you would like to share some personal time with a child - you may have something special to offer. A valuable friendship and bond may develop that could last a lifetime.

Big Brothers and Sisters of Ajax-Pickering
905-831-3777

Big Brothers and Sisters of Clarington
905-623-6646

Books for Babies @ Your Library™.
Giving our children the gift of literacy

Children with good reading skills learn better and faster. To help fight illiteracy and encourage children at a young age to read, local agencies have re-launched the successful program called "Books for babies @ Your Library."

Spearheaded by area "Friends of the Library" groups, regional libraries, and local sponsors, the program offers new mothers a special reading package at their local library. Tucked inside, parents will find items to encourage early reading by the child, such as a board book, a finger play brochure, library information, book suggestions and a night light supplied by Ontario Power Generation (OPG).

If you are a new parent - see what your local library has to offer!

Artist in the Info Centre

Pickering Nuclear is a proud sponsor of the Pine-Ridge Arts Council. One of the ways we support PRAC is by showcasing the work of their artists at our Information Centre, located on site. Mia Azevedo's oil on canvas show continues until March 12. From March 15 to May 10, water-colour artist Bernie Bainbridge will be exhibiting her work.

The Pickering Nuclear Information Centre, located at 1675 Montgomery Park Road is open to the public weekdays between 9:00 a.m and 3:30 p.m. Admission is free and everyone is welcome!



Join Pickering Nuclear during **March Break** for great family fun! All events are **FREE**, and there's something exciting for every kid, aged 12 and under. Please note that all children must be accompanied by an adult.

Skating Party

MONDAY, MARCH 15 1:00PM - 3:00PM
Pickering Recreation Centre

Put on your blades, helmet and have a blast at this **FREE** recreational skate. Fun for the whole family. Admission is **FREE** between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM.

splish...splish SWIM

TUESDAY, MARCH 16 7:00PM - 9:00PM
Pickering Recreation Centre

Splish splash the day away with your family in this winter escape. Admission is **FREE** between 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM.

ABORIGINAL LEGENDS WITH CHIEF TOPLEAF

PICKERING
TOWN CENTRE

My kind of mall

pickeringtowncentre.com

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17
10:00AM & 1:00PM

Gather 'round and learn about aboriginal life through stories and legends. This event is held in centre court area on the lower level. Showtimes at 10 AM and 1 PM. Admission is **FREE!**



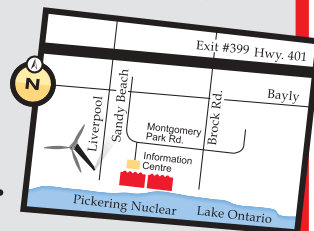
Design Daisyville



THURSDAY, MARCH 18 11:00AM - 2:00PM

Pickering Nuclear Information Centre

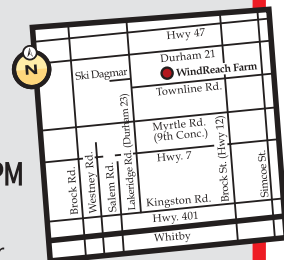
It's Daisy's day at the Information Centre! Build an environmentally friendly place where Daisy, the TVOKids' adorable "hamster host", can hang out. Please bring your recyclable materials (boxes, egg cartons, old toys) and your engineering minds! Event is held indoors. Admission is **FREE!**



FUN ON THE FARM

FRIDAY, MARCH 19 11:00AM - 2:00PM
WindReach Farm

Join Patsy the donkey and all her animal friends for lots of fun at WindReach Farm. Enjoy a few hours in the country; visit the petting zoo, nature trail, farm museum, and take a wagon ride! Fun for the whole family, with lots of activities to keep you warm! Please dress for the weather. This is a wheelchair accessible facility. Admission is **FREE!**



For more information on our March Break programs as well as other Pickering Nuclear Information Centre events, please call **905-837-7272** or email pickeringnuclear@opg.com.

Neighbours

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**ONTARIO POWER
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