

## MEDIA SCAN: HYDRO RATE REDUCTION PLAN

August 29, 2017

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|                                                                                                                                                                               |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <b><u>Print Coverage</u></b> .....                                                                                                                                            | 2 |
| <b><u>Sudbury Star</u></b> : <a href="#">Businesses may save; Program could cut energy costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars a year; A4; 2017.08.29</a> .....             | 2 |
| <b><u>North Bay Nugget</u></b> : <a href="#">Businesses may save; Program could cut energy costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars a year; A1 / Front; 2017.08.29</a> ..... | 4 |

## PRINT COVERAGE

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**SUDBURY STAR:** *BUSINESSES MAY SAVE; PROGRAM COULD CUT ENERGY COSTS BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS A YEAR; A4; 2017.08.29*

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BYLINE: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles

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ILLUSTRATION: Jennifer Hamilton-Mccharles, The Nugget / Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault announced Canadore College's participation in the province's Industrial Conservation Initiative under Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan Monday morning. The college is looking to save between \$250,000 to \$1 million over the next three years.;

WORD COUNT: 635

Businesses may save; Program could cut energy costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars a year

Some of the biggest employers in North Bay will see a significant cut on their hydro rates.

Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault was in North Bay Monday to announce the recent expansion to the Industrial Conservation Initiative under Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan.

Canadore College is the most recent business that has signed up for the program and is expecting to save up to one-third of its hydro costs.

The college is hoping to reduce its electricity bill by \$250,000 to \$1 million spread over the next three years.

Thibeault said the Liberals have expanded the program to allow more businesses to benefit from the cost savings.

Businesses consuming one megawatt and those with an average monthly peak demand greater than 500 kilowatts in the manufacturing and greenhouse sectors will benefit from the program.

"This program started a few years ago at five megawatts and then it was dropped to three megawatts. When I took over as energy minister I looked at dropping it even more to help businesses and lower it to one megawatt. Through the Fair Hydro Plan some specific companies can qualify now after using 500 kilowatts."

When asked whether he would consider lowering it even further to allow more businesses to tap into the savings, he said he wasn't sure if that would happen.

"I'm not sure if lowering the threshold would make a difference."

Todd Wilcox, chief executive officer at North Bay Hydro, thinks so.

He said under the current eligibility there are 10 to 15 customers that might be able to participate. Initially, one customer was eligible before the province lowered the threshold.

"I'm hopeful that they will lower it down even further so more customers can participate in this program. If I had my way I would lower it down to 50 kilowatts, which would open up the program to 300 or 400 small businesses in North Bay."

Wilcox said the program is good news for the city and for business.

He said four of the larger businesses in the city are signed up, however a further four or five businesses are eligible.

"These businesses are some of the major employers in town and a major contributor to the local economy. If we get some of those companies to participate, the savings are quite significant and the money stays local," Wilcox said during a news conference at Canadore College's Commerce Court Campus.

"The electricity bill for some of the city's larger employers is around \$100,000 per month, the savings with this program could be \$25,000 to \$30,000 a month. That puts their cost per kilowatt hour competitive with almost any place in North America."

Wilcox said to participate in the program, businesses have to work to achieve the savings.

"It's not automatic. You have to avoid consumption in your facility during the five peak provincial hours. There's no telling when those five hours will occur. So you have to watch the grid, which you can do online and is usually during hot temperatures in the summer," he said.

"Once the peak occurs you want to reduce your consumption. You have to hit those five hours to enjoy the perks. So you have to turn things off and reduce consumption."

But not everyone is convinced. Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli said this announcement is another desperate pre-election attempt.

He warned voters that Premier Kathleen Wynne will raise hydro rates if elected.

"Many businesses are leaving the province. We had terrible news last week when General Electric announced they were leaving Peterborough, affecting 358 employees," Fedeli said.

"Another huge company in Chatham-Kent announced it was moving to Michigan. Wynne made Ontario the most expensive jurisdiction to do business," he said.

"Sadly we will see more and more continue to leave. Announcements like these aren't fooling the business community."

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***NORTH BAY NUGGET: BUSINESSES MAY SAVE; PROGRAM COULD CUT ENERGY COSTS BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS A YEAR; A1 / FRONT; 2017.08.29***

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