

Afternoon Energy Media Summary - March 24, 2017

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Date: Fri, 24 Mar 2017 15:00:47 -0400

Good Afternoon,

Here is a roundup of the day's news:

- Hydro Rate Shock Felt At Bluewater Health- Blackburn News
- Cost of natural gas to rise in Ontario April 1- CBC
- Ameresco Partnership Assists London District Catholic School Board to Meet Climate Change Targets- Yahoo Finance
- Ontario greenhouse grower markets 4.8 million dozen English cucumbers- Fresh Plaza
- Hydro One encourages its customers to think about climate change by participating in Earth Hour- News Wire
- No Joke Union Gas prices going way up April 1st- Sault Online
- Athens store's hydro woes used to hammer Wynne at Queen's Park- Recorder
- Hydro woes continue to drag Kathleen Wynne's popularity down- 680 News

Please see below Today in Twitter for news articles.

March 24, 2017 Today in Twitter

- [@AnnHoggarthMPP](#) - Great to join [@GlennThibeault](#) at Common Roof in Orillia this morning to talk about Ontario's Fair Energy Plan. [@Clarke4Orillia](#)
- [@orilliatoday](#) - Ontario energy minister in Orillia, speaking about government's 'fair hydro plan'. Average bill to drop 25 per cent.
- [@Jacinallhonesty](#) - Ontario hydro ads not in contempt of parliament, Speaker rules
- [@bersonphoto](#) - 100s of [@CUPEOntario](#) members gather at [#niagarafalls](#) to fiercely protest privatization of Ontario Hydro [#sswcc17](#) [#keephydropublic](#) [@cupenat](#)
- [@khash27](#) - Energy Minister [@GlennThibeault](#) speaking at Common Roof in [#Orillia](#) on government's plan to cut hydro rates.
- [@sunshineorillia](#) - Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault visits Housing Resource Centre in Orillia at 11 a.m. today.

For today's images, click [here](#)

[Hydro Rate Shock Felt At Bluewater Health](#)

By: Josh Boyce
For: Blackburn News
On: March 24, 2017

Bluewater Health is one of many Ontario hospitals that have been hit hard by skyrocketing hydro costs.

The hospital's power bill of nearly \$3-million this fiscal year ending March 31, is up about \$500,000 over the previous year.

CEO Mike Lapaine says fortunately they're still projecting a small surplus but he says the escalating trend is not sustainable.

"The budget was tabled Wednesday night for the board's 2017-18 fiscal year," says Lapaine. "If there's no augmentation to hospital funding, we would be projecting a \$1.3-million deficit. However, the ministry has not yet announced funding for hospitals so it's still premature to be predicting that."

Lapaine is hopeful some inflation relief for hospitals will be included in the next provincial budget.

He says Bluewater Health made a commitment to maintain staffing levels for the next fiscal year.

[Cost of natural gas to rise in Ontario April 1](#)

By: Staff Post
For: CBC
On: March 24, 2017

The cost of natural gas is about to go up for much of Ontario.

The Ontario Energy Board announced it has approved price increases set to kick in April 1.

Natural gas price hike for Ontario, just in time for fall

Ontario plunges into cap and trade with first carbon auction

Union Gas customers in the southern portion of the province will see their monthly bills increase by about \$1.68 — roughly \$20 per year.

Even with the cost hike the OEB said customers will be paying "significantly less" than they were in 2009 and 2014 when rates were higher because of high market prices and cold weather.

[Ameresco Partnership Assists London District Catholic School Board to Meet Climate Change Targets](#)

By: Staff Post
For: Yahoo Finance
On: March 24, 2017

Ameresco, Inc. ([AMRC](#)), a leading [energy efficiency](#) and [renewable energy](#) company, announced today that it is progressing on its energy savings project with the London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) and helping the Board fulfill new climate change targets. The comprehensive \$9.9 million (CAD) energy efficiency and facility renewal project is expected to save more than \$500,000 annually in utility costs. The project, which began last year and is expected to be completed in 2018, is implementing energy infrastructure retrofits and enhancements that promise greater efficiency, cost savings, reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and more comfortable teaching and learning environments.

“Ameresco is proud to continue our work with the London District Catholic School Board on this Board-wide renewal project,” said Bob McCullough, President, Ameresco Canada. “This project supports a range of building improvements that are expected to deliver energy cost-savings and better facility conditions, allowing the Board to improve classroom environments for approximately 54 schools. While this project provides the Board with sustainable solutions, it also provides students with an example of environmental stewardship.”

Under the energy savings partnership, measures to optimize efficiency are as follows: lighting retrofits and installation of energy-efficient lighting; building automation system enhancements; heating, cooling and ventilation improvements; and electrical and mechanical retrofits, including boilers and water heaters.

The environmental benefits from this project include GHG emission reductions of 10 per cent, a substantial step towards meeting the recently implemented Ontario Climate Change Action Plan target of a 15 percent reduction in GHG by 2020. The facility renewal measures are also in step with the Conservation and Demand Management target set out by the Ontario Energy Board.

With this project, Ameresco expands on its previous experience working with the LDSCB over the past decade. Past projects worth a combined \$25 million have provided extensive enhancements to energy efficiency at LDSCB facilities in addition to Solar PV roof top assets of \$3 million. Measures have included: assessment and energy audits; heating, cooling and ventilation improvements; the replacement of outdated electrical and mechanical equipment; and solar energy photovoltaic installations.

About Ameresco

Founded in 2000, Ameresco, Inc. ([AMRC](#)) is a leading independent provider of comprehensive services, energy efficiency, infrastructure upgrades, asset sustainability and renewable energy solutions for businesses and organizations throughout North America and Europe. Ameresco’s sustainability services include upgrades to a facility’s energy infrastructure and the development, construction and operation of renewable energy plants. Ameresco has successfully completed energy saving, environmentally responsible projects with federal, state/provincial and local governments, healthcare and educational institutions, housing authorities, and commercial and industrial customers. With its corporate headquarters in Framingham, MA, Ameresco has more than 1,000 employees providing local expertise in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. For further information, visit www.ameresco.com.

The announcement of a customer’s entry into a project contract is not necessarily indicative of the timing or amount of revenue from such contract, of the company’s overall revenue for any particular period or of trends in the company’s overall total construction backlog. The project was reflected in our contracted backlog as of December 31, 2016.

[Ontario greenhouse grower markets 4.8 million dozen English cucumbers](#)

By: Staff Post

For: Fresh Plaza

March 24, 2017

In 1985, Great Lakes Greenhouses started growing greenhouse cucumbers on 2.3 acres in Leamington Ontario. Now, 32 years later, the family-owned company grows 90 acres of English seedless cucumbers, still on one property. “We are attempting to be as vertically integrated as possible and have control from seed to consumer,” says David Revington VP of Business Development with Great Lakes Greenhouses. “We plant our own seed in a four-acre propagation greenhouse under lights,” he added.

4.8 million dozens per year

On 90 acres, the rotation of several 10-15 acre ranges always keeps the greenhouse under

steady production. A crop is generally harvested for eight weeks. The range is cleaned out and disinfected and the young plants are set. "Our growers try to balance planting and production cycles, but we can get into situations throughout the year where we may be harvesting the entire farm in the same week or so," he mentioned. This is unavoidable and happens a few times per year. When the entire farm is in production, packing can be on a 2 shift per day basis and the packout can peak out at over 200K dozens per week. On average, the company harvests 4.8 million dozen English seedless cucumbers per year and packs year-round. "As I understand we are the largest greenhouse cucumber grower-shipper in North America," said Revington.

Organic segment

Great Lakes grows its cucumbers conventionally, but is expanding into the organic sector. "Our grower team has been working on developing an organic program for over a year now and we will be offering organically grown seedless by the end of the summer," said Revington."

Organically grown veg has been in the dialogue for many years and the consumer has shown the industry that there exists a demand for food products deemed to contribute to a healthier diet and lifestyle."

Sustainability is a key word at Great Lakes. "With energy costs increasing and a more stable natural gas market we have shifted toward and invested in an in-house power generation program through the installment of several natural gas engines."

As of last fall, Great Lakes is selling and marketing its own crop. "In the past, our product was sold by one of the larger greenhouse marketing companies here. We are now packing and selling our entire production in house. In an effort to grow our business out and develop label identification in the marketplace, we have joined the PMA, CPMA, United Fresh, Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) and are Bluebook listed. In addition, we achieved our PRIMUS GFS certification in the greenhouse and pack shed." As a result Great Lakes Greenhouses is working hard at being identified as the premier grower and shipper of greenhouse grown seedless cucumbers in North America.

[Hydro One encourages its customers to think about climate change by participating in Earth Hour](#)

By: Staff Post

For: News wire

On: March 24, 2017

TORONTO, March 24, 2017 /CNW/ - On Saturday, March 25, 2017 at 8:30 p.m. Hydro One customers will join millions of people worldwide in conserving energy in support of Earth Hour. This year, Earth Hour is shining a light on climate action.

"Hydro One has been a proud supporter of Earth Hour since 2008 and works to balance its operational requirements while protecting the environment," said Greg Kiraly, Chief Operations Officer. "Earth Hour reminds us that when we unite, small actions can make a large impact on climate change."

In addition to turning out the lights for Earth Hour, Hydro One has tips for customers looking to reduce their electricity use.

Switch to a cold cycle when doing laundry. About 25 per cent of hot water in your home is used by the washer.

Choose the energy-saving or air drying cycle on your dishwasher

Unplug devices when not in use to reduce phantom or standby power. The average Canadian home has 25 or more electronic devices that contribute to phantom power, costing approximately \$150 a year in electricity.

Make the switch to LED lights. LED bulbs use up to 75 per cent less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

Use a programmable thermostat to control the temperature when you are at home or away.
Use plug covers on unused electrical outlets that are on external walls. Up to 20 per cent of the air leakage in your home can happen through outlets.
Use a timer on outdoor lighting or consider motion sensor lighting.
Hydro One customers interested in finding out how much electricity consumption they reduced during Earth Hour can sign up for the Time-of-Use portal at: www.HydroOne.com/MyAccount. This portal shows hourly usage every day of the year along with temperature. Reviewing hourly electricity use can help you target areas to save in your home either by unplugging unnecessary appliances or shifting usage to off-peak hours.

Hydro One has participated in Earth Hour since 2008, encouraging its employees to turn off lights at home and at work before leaving for the weekend. Hydro One will also turn off all non-essential electrical equipment at its facilities across the province, but will need to keep on some lighting for the safety of the public and workers.

[No Joke Union Gas prices going way up April 1st](#)

By: Craig Huckerby
For: Sault Online
On: March 24, 2017

Natural gas rates are going up April 1 for customers in Ontario, particularly for those served by Union Gas.

The Canadian Press is reporting that the Ontario Energy Board approved a rate increase for Union Gas customers and those who heat their homes in Northern Ontario will see the biggest increase. Union Gas customers can expect a jump of \$50.30 a year or \$4.19 a month on top of the new carbon tax of \$5 a month on average that was added to the bills in January as part of the Wynne government's cap and trade.

Those living in Southern Ontario will see the smallest jump of just \$20.20 a year.

In its decision the OEB says the large increases are mostly due to previous credits expiring.

It says that in the case of "exceptionally large rate increases" the OEB can consider some rate mitigation measures, but in this case the threshold was not met.

Other natural gas providers are also upping their rates though Union Gas customers are faced with the bigger increases.

The OEB says, "despite these rate changes, overall, customers are still paying significantly less than they were at peak periods in 2009 and 2014, when natural gas costs were higher in Ontario due to factors including high market prices and unusually cold weather."

[Athens store's hydro woes used to hammer Wynne at Queen's Park](#)

By: Wayne Lowrie
For: Recorder
On: March 24, 2017

Leeds-Grenville MPP Steve Clark has used the closing of Swan's Variety Store in Athens to hammer the provincial government over high hydro rates.

Clark told the legislature on Tuesday that Swan's operated for 47 years, surviving a major fire and running the business through the terms of eight premiers, but not the ninth.

"On Friday, heartbroken owner Karen Swan turned out the lights for the last time," Clark said during Question Period. "It wasn't the lack of customers that spelled the end for Swan's; it was

the crippling cost of hydro, culminating in last month's outrageous \$7,000 bill."

Clark asked the premier why she waited so long to act on the hydro crisis that contributed to the closing of the family-run business in Athens.

"The premier diminishes the hydro crisis and energy poverty she created by calling it a 'mistake.' What does the premier have to say to Karen Swan, who just paid for this 'mistake' with her family business?" asked Clark.

Karen Swan closed her family store on Friday, citing hydro costs of \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month, the refusal of the province to crack down on illegal cigarettes and government red tape in general. The distraught Swan, 56, said she had worked in the family business since the age of nine and had poured her life into the variety store.

Premier Kathleen Wynne said she wasn't aware of the Swan case, but added that small business across Ontario will benefit from a 25-per-cent reduction in hydro bills this summer.

She said Ontario residents have been asked to pay for upgrades to the power system that was neglected over the years, and that's why the government is spreading the cost of the improvements over many years with the 25 per cent reduction.

"Again, I don't know the specific circumstances around this business, but we understand very clearly that small businesses, Mom-and-Pop businesses, in towns around the province need support," she told the legislature.

Clark said the premier has for years ignored warnings from him and other PC MPPs that unaffordable hydro rates were destroying our communities.

"Now, when her political future is at stake, she suddenly claims to care," said Clark. "They shamelessly spend taxpayer dollars on ads designed to portray themselves as heroes in a disaster they created."

Clark said no one trusts the Wynne government to fix the problem that it created.

"Ontarians will never forget this premier did nothing as hydro rates soared, businesses closed and families were forced from their homes," he said.

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault said the previous Conservative government left the electricity grid in a "disaster" with rolling brownouts on a regular basis.

"So we acted. This government – this party – acted, and made sure that we rebuilt the system, rebuilt generation, rebuilt transmission and rebuilt distribution. That was needed to ensure that all businesses in this province and all families in this province were able to keep the lights on," Thibeault said.

[Hydro woes continue to drag Kathleen Wynne's popularity down](#)

By: Staff Post

For: 680 News

On: March 24, 2017

Kathleen Wynne's popularity as premier is the lowest among Canadian provincial leaders, according to the latest quarterly poll from the Angus Reid Institute.

Echoing results of similar polls over the past few months, Wynne's approval rating within Ontario has slipped to 12 per cent, a four point drop since the last survey was taken.

The Hydro One sale continues to be the albatross around the Liberal premier's neck. More than

eight in 10 Ontarians say they are opposed to the sale of Hydro One with 49 per cent of those saying they are “strongly” opposed to privatization. Another 76 per cent of those polled say they expect the sale to lead to even higher hydro rates.

As well, three quarters of Ontarians describe their household energy bills as “unreasonable”.

More than three in four say the electricity-related issues will be important factors when it comes to deciding who to vote for in the next provincial election.

While Wynne’s approval continues to tumble, it was not the most dramatic fall among the other 10 premiers. Brad Wall of Saskatchewan saw his popularity slip six per cent, however, he remains the most popular of the provincial leaders at 52 per cent.

Only Quebec’s Philippe Couillard saw his popularity increase, up five per cent, thanks in large part to his handling of a multiple shooting at an Islamic Cultural Centre that left six dead.

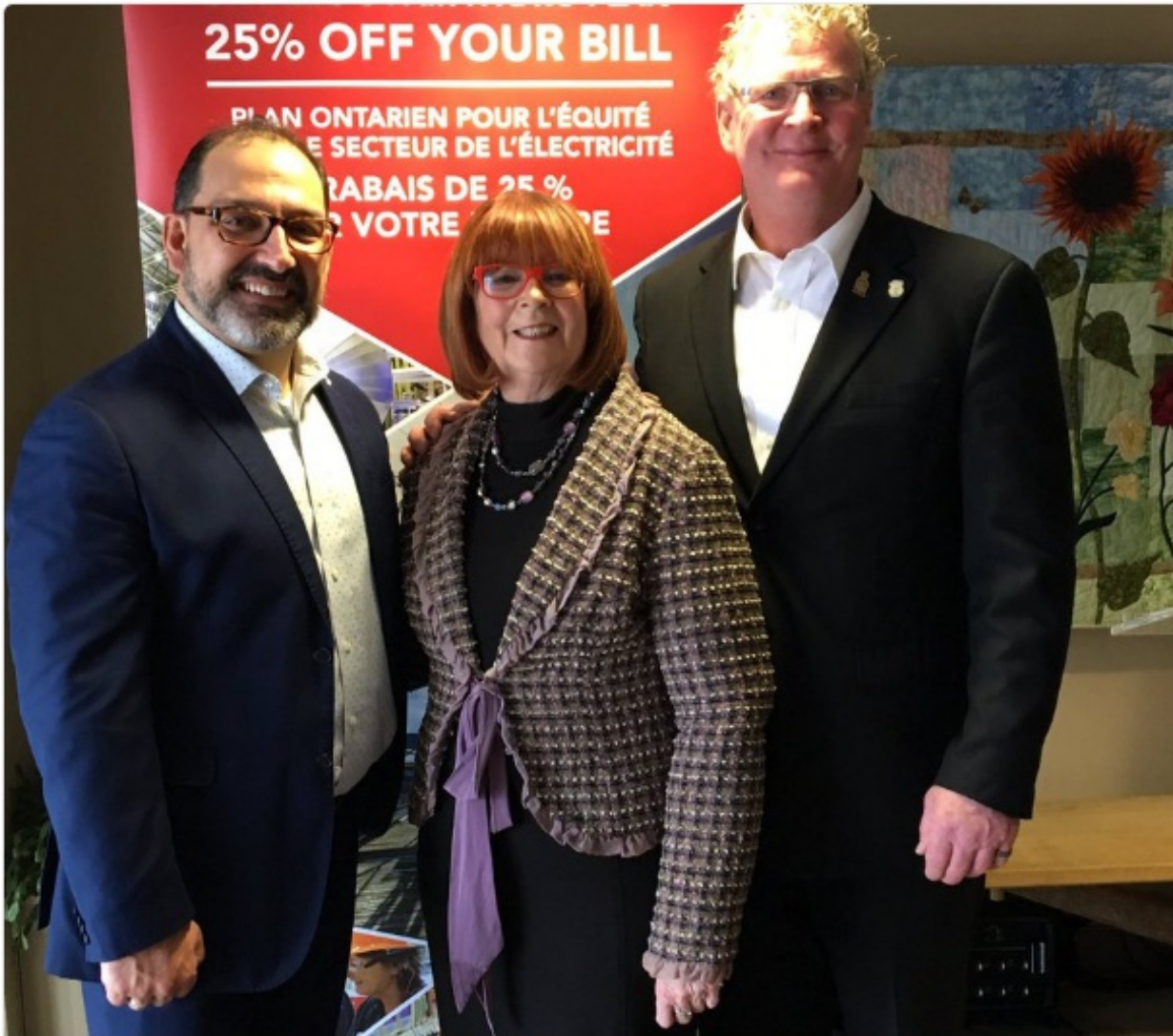
Visuals



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Ontario energy minister in Orillia, speaking about government's 'fair hydro plan'. Average bill to drop 25 per cent.





Joshua Berson
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100s of @CUPEOntario members gather at #niagarafalls to fiercely protest privatization of Ontario Hydro #sswcc17 #keephydropublic @cupenat



Energy Minister @GlennThibeault speaking at Common Roof in #Orillia on government's plan to cut hydro rates.

