Ministry of Energy Top Issues - November 1, 2016

From: "Kourakos, Georgina (ENERGY)" <georgina.kourakos@ontario.ca>
To: "@ENERGY-All" <energy.all@msgov.gov.on.ca>
Date: Tue, 01 Nov 2016 07:13:51 -0400

Good morning,

Here's what's making news:

- Business, families feeling pinch from hydro costs – Sudbury Star
- MPP Vic Fedeli Calls Attention To High Costs Of Hydro For Businesses In Northern Ontario - MCTV
- New gas pipeline needed for Windsor-Essex agri-businesses – Windsor Star
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- Wynne touts energy audit, retrofit rebates for 37,000 Ontario homeowners - CBC.CA News
- Letter: Nuclear power needed - The Timmins Daily Press
- Hydro One completes acquisition of Great Lakes Power Electricity Transmission business - Canada Newswire
- Suncor sells lubricants business for $1.13B; Ontario wind power assets on block next - Peterborough Examiner

Business, families feeling pinch from hydro costs
By Harold Carmichael, The Sudbury Star
Monday, October 31, 2016 10:13:46 EDT PM
Escalating monthly hydro bills at Milman Industries Inc. haven't reached the point where layoffs or production cutbacks are being considered, but they are impacting growth and development with the local business and its eight-member group of companies, says the company's vice-president.

"Business is affected in a number of ways," said Gilles Lebeau, at a press conference at the company's offices Monday. "It's a big disadvantage we have to deal with. What it affects now is our ability to grow our business. We want to add jobs. There has been a lot of jobs on my desk in the past year I have said no to."

Lebeau, who was accompanied by Nipissing Progressive Conservative MPP and Finance Critic Vic Fedeli, produced an April, 2016 Greater Sudbury Hydro bill for Milman Industries Inc. which totalled $41,959.63, with the actual cost of the electricity used being just $1,253.16. The largest item on the bill was the global adjustment cost, which came to $26,213.93, followed by delivery at $6,731.12 and HST at $4,827.21.

Lebeau said he first noticed a hike in the business's hydro bill a few years ago, and it's been going up by leaps and bounds since. He said he has come to the conclusion that cutting electricity use would do very little to reduce the bill, due to all the fixed costs being charged.

"The frustrating part is no matter how hard we work at cutting back, the bills still go up," said the vice-president. "All of the things that we could do, we have. We have done all that."

Lebeau said it would take all Ontarians working collectively to get the province's attention with hydro bills.

"If you were to cut the consumption in half, they (government) would be in trouble," he said.

Fedeli called the Milman Industries Inc. energy bill "a prime example" of how the Kathleen Wynne government's failed energy policy is affecting Northern businesses and jobs.

"You have a bill of $42,000, but only $1,253.16 of that is for energy," he said. "The cost of electricity here in Ontario is escalating out of control and it has a real impact on our industries and job growth in the North. Over $26,000 is for something that wasn't even on a bill a few years ago."

Headquartered on Municipal Road 35 between Copper Cliff and Azilda, Milman Industries Inc. consists of eight companies including Sudbury Lime, Herby, BM Metals and Consolidated Logistics Inc. The main site workforce totals about 300.

Fedeli said the global adjustment charge is included in residential hydro bills as well, but it's "buried" within the bill.

"The government lost a by-election in Scarborough-Rouge River (in September) and all of a sudden realized the real trouble," he said. "I knocked on doors there and all they wanted to talk about was hydro, hydro, hydro. Some people there, their hydro bills were higher than their mortgage. There is an issue in energy in Ontario. They are not facing the core problem of what is in your energy bill. They are just applying Band-Aids."

Fedeli also said new Energy Minister (and Sudbury Liberal MPP) Glenn Thibeault's recent announcement that the province will provide some financial relief to lower-income Ontarians doesn't wash as bills are based on how a residence is rated. He said his home in Corbeil, for example, is rated medium density, despite being in a rural area, while Greater Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay, are all designated high-density areas. As for low-density areas, there are very few of them across Ontario, said the MPP.

Fedeli said the root problem with rising electricity costs in Ontario is the Green Energy Act which dictates that the province has to buy power, even if it is not needed, at high cost, but often has to sell that power at low cost to neighbouring Quebec or northern states or even pay them to take it.

The policy, noted Fedeli, has even led to shutting down a generator at Niagara Falls on occasion where producing power is cheaper, due to having to buy expensive wind or solar-generated power through fixed contracts.

Lebeau said Milman Industries Inc.'s annual energy bills at its two sites (the other is a foundry in New Sudbury) now come to more than $750,000 a year.

"It's a lot, but it's something that has to get fixed," he said. "The government can't push this down the road."

Lebeau said it's one thing to have to deal with high electricity bills at the business, but his employees are also being hard hit at home. He said a visit to a lunchroom will often find staff discussing their hydro bills, not things such as who won a hockey game.

"Our 500 employees, they are hurting," he said. "We are feeling it every day and we are feeling for them. This is affecting every single person in the province and this is a serious thing."

MPP Vic Fedeli Calls Attention To High Costs Of Hydro For Businesses In Northern Ontario
Source: MCTV
Oct 31, 2016 6:02 PM (4)

Anchor: More talk today about high energy costs. Ontario PC Finance Critic and Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli was again highlighting the issue, saying rates are astonishing high, especially for people in northern Ontario. He was at a local business that supplies the mining and railway industries and is facing huge energy costs. More from CTV's Alana Everson.

Reporter: Milman Industries employs 300 people. Gilles Lebeau is the Vice President and he showed us this recent monthly Hydro bill for almost $42,000.

Gilles Lebeau, Milman Industries V.P.: The message I'm just trying to get out is that people are hurting, and we need to fix this because it will affect business big time.

Reporter: He says the actual cost for electricity on the bill is just over $1,200. He points out a global adjustment charge of over $26,000.

Lebeau: It's a challenge, right. It's gone up quite a bit. The challenge is how do we bring that down, which is quite difficult in how the bills are structured.

Reporter: Hydro One says the global adjustment covers the cost for providing both adequate generating capacity and conservation and demand management programs across the province. PC Finance Critic Vic Fedeli says companies like Milman Industries have no control over that charge.

Vic Fedeli, PC Finance Critic: That's the pot that the government gets money out of to pay for their mistakes in the green energy sector.

Reporter: He adds people in the north, both commercial and residential, are paying more for Hydro.

MPP Fedeli: The Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario told us that here in the north we pay over 45 per cent more for electricity than residents in Toronto have paid between 2012 and 2014. That's a glaring, glaring issue for those of us who live in the north.

Reporter: Officials at this northern company say rising energy costs are a barrier to growth. They say they've already turned down new projects because of those costs. Alana Everson, CTV News, Sudbury.

Transcript captured directly from source. Some typographical errors or omissions are to be expected.

New gas pipeline needed for Windsor-Essex agri-businesses
ROSEANN DANESE, WINDSOR STAR
More from Roseann Danese, Windsor Star
Published on: October 31, 2016 | Last Updated: October 31, 2016 9:13 PM EDT

The expansion of a natural gas pipeline that will benefit Essex County’s $2-billion greenhouse industry isn’t coming fast enough, the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation board heard Monday.

Lakeshore Mayor Tom Bain, a director on the corporation’s board, said the slow pace of a gas pipeline expansion in the area is having an effect on business retention and expansion. There’s barely enough room in the system for new homes, he said. “We’ve been told any big factory, forget it, any medium-sized factory, forget it.”

“With the last large project that we put in Lakeshore, Union Gas had to come up with a back up system because of a shortage of gas for the area,” Bain said.

Union Gas is awaiting Ontario Energy Board approval for something called the Panhandle natural gas transmission system project, which will serve the needs of customers in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent, including the greenhouse industry, for about four to five more years. It involves more than doubling the size of a transmission line, from a diameter of 16 inches to 36 inches, which will allow additional natural gas to be available on a daily basis.

Stephen MacKenzie, the development corporation’s new CEO, said he met recently with a Union Gas representative, who confirmed the company is committed to the Panhandle project. Construction of the $270-million project is set to begin in the spring and completion is expected in the fall of 2017.

“It’s extremely important to get that passed through the Ontario Energy Board,” Bain said. “Unfortunately progress is very slow. It looks like we’re going to get that line, but we’re saying we need that line tomorrow.”

Board chair Marty Komsa directed administrators with the development corporation to treat the pipeline expansion project “as a priority” and press Union Gas to move forward as quickly as possible.

The Ontario and Windsor-Essex chambers of commerce last month released a report with recommendations designed to address barriers to the competitiveness of the province’s agri-food sector, which it described as one of the most significant economic drivers in the province, representing $36.4 billion in GDP and jobs for one in nine Ontarians. One of the recommendations, according to the chamber’s CEO Matt Marchand, was for access to reliable and adequate natural gas year-round.

“In Windsor-Essex, agri-food stakeholders cited increased costs, regulatory pressures and the availability and reliability of natural gas as a barrier to growing their competitiveness,” Marchand said in a statement. “Ontario has the largest net loss of plants in the country. Locally, we’ve lost $450 million in investment in two examples alone: Golden Acre Farms and Nature Fresh Farms who set up plants in Ohio instead.”

Grey/Bruce Health Services hit by rising hydro rates
Meaford Express
November 1, 2016
By Chris Fell

Residential homeowners aren't the only ones getting hurt by rising hydro rates – local hospitals have taken a massive hit over the past year.

Grey Bruce Health Services, the umbrella corporation responsible for six area hospitals including Meaford and Owen Sound, saw its electricity rates go up by 40 per cent year-over-year.

"It certainly is a significant impact we're feeling here in terms of escalating hydro costs," said GBHS CEO Lance Thurston. "It was a bad year. The summer was so long and hot and the distribution part of the bill is interesting."

The 40 per cent increase represents a $350,000 hit to the budget of the local hospital corporation, which is already running a multi-million deficit.

"We're working through a number of scenarios to bring our cost structure down," said Thurston.

The problem has become so severe for hospitals and long-term care facilities, MPP Bill Walker recently raised the matter during Question Period at the legislature.

"The hydro disaster is acute for hospitals and long-term care homes where electricity bills spiked by as much as 40 per cent last year. Instead of putting money into better food for seniors, personal support workers or new mattresses to reduce bedsores, nursing homes are forced to redirect $30 million to cover last year's hydro hikes. What's so fair about paying more for hydro hikes than feeding and bathing frail senior patients?" Walker asked the premier.

Minister of Energy Glenn Thibeault said the government has programs in place to help hospitals.

"I'm very proud to say our conservation program actually helps hospitals, helps municipalities and it helps arenas. It helps everyone," he said, in response. "We have so many programs out there that we continue to promote."

Thurston said the hospital corporation his a four-year plan to balance its budget. He said the hydro increases hurt, as did a change to the provincial funding model three years ago.

"Of the 32 hospital corporations in Ontario negatively affected by the funding formula, five had a severe impact. Number 1, was Grey/Bruce Health Services. Our model of one hub and five small hospitals is unique in Ontario," said Thurston. "We're doing all this work to find efficiencies and then our revenue drops."

Thurston said the GBHS is working on a number of efficiency efforts, but cuts aren't the full solution.

"We can only go so far. We're in a bit of a pickle," he said. "The question is: what can we do to maintain services and reduce our cost structure?"

They want to hear your hydro horror stories; But Tories and NDP can't fix problem to reduce current cost of electricity
Ottawa Citizen
Tue Nov 1 2016
Page: A2
Section: City
Byline: David Reevely
Source: Ottawa Citizen

Lorenzo's pizza parlour has been on Queen Mary Street in Overbrook for 40 years and its electricity prices have never been a bigger worry, its owner told Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown on Monday.

"If it's going to stay like this, a lot of people are going to shut down," said Elie Kirkish, the owner. His hydro bill can be $2,400 a month in the summer, when the air conditioning and ovens are both on, he said. Even in the winter, it's $1,700. He thought about buying a generator to supplement the power he gets from Hydro Ottawa, he said.

Brown was at Lorenzo's with André Marin - his party's candidate in the Nov. 17 byelection in Ottawa-Vanier - drawing attention to "hydro horror stories" such as Kirkish's.

Monday was Hydro Day in Ottawa-Vanier: New Democratic Party leader Andrea Horwath held a campaign event with her candidate, Claude Bisson, at almost the same time, overlooking the Ottawa River in Rockcliffe Park to emphasize how much cheaper electricity is in Quebec.

Both opposition parties excoriated the Liberal record on electricity prices, cracked similar jokes about scary hydro bills and Halloween, and invited Ontarians to share their tales of hydro hardship on party websites. The Progressive Conservatives' is www.hydrohorrorstory.ca; the New Democrats' is at www.claudebissonndp.ca/hydrostories and is more narrowly focused on Ottawa-Vanier.

This should supply each party some attack anecdotes. It's also a way to harvest the contact information of voters who might be open to persuasion. Neither the Tories nor the NDP need convincing that expensive electricity is a great election issue.

"I hope you guys, when you make it, you have a plan for this," Kirkish told the Tories.

Well, they have a plan, but it won't really cut Kirkish's bill. Neither will the New Democrats'.

When the Liberals took over in 2003, government pleas to use less electricity or risk brownouts were routine. Now Ontario has a surplus of electricity, which we need because we're about to start turning offnuclear reactors for once-in-a-lifetime overhauls (we call it "hydro" but our electricity supply is almost two-thirds nuclear, not hydroelectric, and the reactors are old). We have the surplus even though we've closed coal generating stations, cleaning up our air and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. This has all been expensive but worth paying for.

The Liberals also let the part of Hydro One that delivers electricity to rural Ontario customers run amok. If André Marin is someday remembered for nothing other than his investigations of the company's sloppy, self-serving billing practices as the province's ombudsman, that'll be a lot.

Under the Liberals, Ontario ran pell-mell into green power, signing contracts with big producers for wind and solar farms at prices we knew were high in the hope of building a domestic industry in research, design and manufacturing. The prices have turned out to be much, much, much higher than today's market rates and we're stuck with them.

When the government got spooked by some projects' unpopularity, it ran away from them. Now we're paying penalties in the millions of dollars for nothing.

The whole thing fuelled the Liberals' cash-for-access fundraising machine, whereby

green-energy companies that got government contracts were often big donors to the Liberal party. Much of it would have been illegal under the new fundraising restrictions the Liberals want to put into provincial law.

So there's lots to attack. As for what would change under a new government, well …

The Progressive Conservative plan for lowering prices, as explained by Brown on Monday: Stop privatizing Hydro One, stop signing new green-energy contracts and restore municipal planning authority over where new wind and solar farms go. Marin said the Tories want to "get in there and undo some of the damage," but all three of these promises are about doing things differently in the future, not undoing anything done in the past.

The New Democratic Party plan for lowering prices, as explained by Horwath: Stop privatizing Hydro One and try to get back the shares we've already sold, look for loopholes and opportunities to renegotiate existing green-energy contracts, try to make better deals when we sell surplus power outside Ontario.

Possibly a Premier Andrea Horwath could find bits and pieces of savings by renegotiating contracts. But she stressed an NDP government wouldn't tear up ones the province has already signed, so we're talking overall about changes way out in the decimal places. Not signing new generating contracts and not selling more pieces of Hydro One would have zero impact on the prices we pay now. Unless we find new rivers in Northern Ontario, we won't be copying Quebec for cheap hydroelectric power.

"The Liberals have made some bad decisions, including some really gross ones, and they should be thrown out of power," is a legitimate pitch for the opposition, with a lot of juice behind it. "If you elect us you will pay less for electricity than you do now" is not.

Ontario Energy Board protecting consumers
North Bay Nugget
Tue Nov 1 2016
Page: A4
Section: Opinion
Byline: John Bozzo
Source: North Bay Nugget

The following is in response to a letter which appears in the Oct. 28 edition of The Nugget.

To the editor: The Ontario Energy Board is independent and unbiased. We're mandated by law to set rates that ensure needed investments in infrastructure are made to keep the lights on and that customers receive the service they deserve at a reasonable cost.

Protecting Ontario's energy consumers - especially low-income consumers - is at the heart of what we do every day.

For example: Since 2009, the OEB has kept the annual growth in the distribution portion of the bill to 2.4 per cent.

Over the past eight years, the OEB has reviewed 112 large rate applications and reduced the requested rate increase by an average of 38 per cent. None of these applications was approved in full.

The OEB has held Hydro One transmission rates to an increase of 0.2 per cent annually since 2009 for a typical residential customer.

During the same time period, changes in the cost of distribution service for Hydro One's largest residential rate class have increased its customers' bills by about 1.4 per cent annually, about the rate of inflation.

The Supreme Court of Canada recently upheld an OEB decision not to allow Ontario Power Generation to recover $145 million in salary and compensation costs from ratepayers. The ruling also confirmed that the OEB's methodology for setting rates is reasonable.

John Bozzo

Vice-president, public affairs Ontario Energy Board

MPP Armstrong Questions Minister Thibeault About OESP During Question Period
Source: CFPL
Oct 31, 2016 6:35 PM (18)

Anchor: During question period today, London-Fanshawe MPP Teresa Armstrong asked the Premier to explain why the Ontario Electricity Support Program fails to include many seniors and other low-income families simply because they live in unit that is not individually metered.

MPP Teresa Armstrong: Seniors on low fixed incomes, calling my office and telling me they are struggling with increased hydro costs. They don't qualify for OESP because their building's hydro bill is split amongst residents. They are living in energy poverty; they are struggling with rising hydro costs and they are below the income cut-off.

Anchor: Energy Minister Glen Thibeault said the government is spending more money on advertising the energy support program, known as the OESP, to encourage more qualified people to apply.

Minister Thibeault: $45 a month for some families goes a long way. And for seniors and families that heat their home with electricity, they can apply and get up to $75 Mr. Speaker, and that's something we're happy to see.

Anchor: The Conservatives have accused the Liberal for spending over $9 million on consultants to set it up, in addition to $2.4 million on advertising. Minister Thibeault says the OESP has delivered about $28 million worth of rebates to low-income families.

Transcript captured directly from source. Some typographical errors or omissions are to be expected.

Toronto Hydro considers slashing dividend, committing funds to infrastructure
The Globe and Mail
Tue Nov 1 2016
Page: A6
Section: News
Byline: JEFF GRAY, OLIVER MOORE

The board of Toronto Hydro is considering whether to slash the dividend the company pays to the City of Toronto - worth $56million last year - as the utility commits more cash to fix its aging infrastructure, according to senior city hall sources.

The Hydro board met on Monday night and will meet again on Nov. 23, when the utility is scheduled to release its third-quarter financial results. It is unclear when the decision on the dividend will be made.

City finance officials, at the urging of Mayor John Tory and city council, are taking a close look at whether to sell-off a portion of Toronto Hydro in order to raise money for other priorities, such as new public-transit lines or repairs to its crumbling public housing.

Reducing or eliminating the dividend could undermine one of the key arguments used by leftleaning city councillors who oppose the sale, which is that Toronto cannot afford to forgo the dividend - typically about half of the utility's net profits - because the cash helps the city balance its own books every year.

However, Toronto Hydro chief executive officer Anthony Haines has warned publicly that the utility needs to raise more money to cover the costs of fixing its aging electricity infrastructure.

One source said that in the past few months, Hydro has been considering the idea of cutting the dividend to shore up its cash flow.

On Monday afternoon, Toronto Hydro communications director Brian Buchan said the corporation's board has not made a move to slash the dividend. "No decision of that nature has been made," he said.

Mr. Buchan said the dividend is expected to be discussed at upcoming board meetings. But he declined to comment further, saying any such discussions are confidential.

"The board is having ongoing discussions about issues like that," he said. "They are not specifically about the dividend. But, you know, the dividend is a consideration."

So far this year, Toronto Hydro has already declared $18.75-million in dividends for the city, covering the first three quarters of 2016.

Even as it considers slashing its dividend, the utility is beginning to benefit from a power-rate increase approved by the Ontario Energy Board that took effect on May 1.

According to its second-quarter financial statements from August, the utility had a profit of $75.5-million in the first six months of 2016, more than double the amount it recorded in the same six months the year before.

The amount in dividends remitted to the city each year may seem small, given Toronto's $10billion operating budget.

But the city's finances are under strain. Costs keep rising, but the mayor has pledged not to raise residential property taxes above the rate of inflation.

It is unclear exactly what effect a lower-than-expected dividend would have on the city's books for the remainder of 2016, as surpluses or reserve funds could be available to cover an immediate shortfall.

But if the dividend were to disappear for next year as well, the challenge of balancing the budget could made more difficult.

Already, the city faces a projected shortfall in the hundreds of millions for its 2017 books, according to budget documents that assume a dividend from Toronto Hydro.

In recent months, Mr. Tory has made a point of highlighting what he said were big deficiencies in Toronto Hydro's infrastructure, using recent blackouts at the downtown condo complex CityPlace to argue that more money is needed to replace aging power transformers and lines.

Offer being studied; Navigant Consulting to report findings to city council by end of month on $105M Hydro One offer to buy PDI

Peterborough Examiner
Tue Nov 1 2016
Page: A1 / Front
Section: News
Byline: Joelle Kovach
Source: Peterborough Examiner

A consultant explained to councillors on Monday how his firm will evaluate an offer from Hydro One to buy the city-owned utility for $105 million.

Navigant Consulting of Toronto is expected to examine the offer and give councillors an opinion on whether it's a good deal. That opinion is expected sometime near the end of November.

Todd Williams, a managing director at Navigant, said the firm will consider whether $105 million is a fair price, for instance, and what effect a sale would be likely to have on hydro bills.

It was the first time council met since Hydro One made its offer, late last week.

And while there was no debate at City Hall about whether to accept the offer, it was clear how some felt about it.

"It's a great deal for us," said Mayor Daryl Bennett. "It's the appropriate thing, to have a look at it."

Bennett and Coun. Dan McWilliams are both members of the board that oversees Peterborough Distribution Inc. (PDI).

That board is called the City of Peterborough Holdings Inc. (CoPHI). It unanimously voted to recommend to councillors that they approve a sale.

Over the next 10 days there will be a series of public meetings on the offer, and council will hear Navigant's opinion at the end of November. Then council will be expected to debate and vote on whether to sell.

Although the offer is for $105 million, the city could expect to receive somewhere between $50-million and $55 million.

That's because PDI has somewhere around $47 million in debt, and there would be taxes and other sale-related expenses to pay.

Coun. Keith Riel was upset that PDI's debt would end up costing the city so much money.

He was also concerned about the potential for job losses or transfers, following a sale, and he wondered why the consultant won't evaluate an alternative such as keeping the utility.

Both Coun. Diane Therrien and Coun. Gary Baldwin asked why Hydro One is so interested in PDI, considering that CoPHI says annual dividends are expected to dwindle.

A letter to council from CoPHI says that although PDI now makes $1.2 million for the city annually, those dividends will decrease to $700,000 soon. That was emphasized as one of the reasons council ought to consider selling.

Williams said Hydro One has met the challenges of delivering electricity across Ontario.

It wouldn't cost the company much to meet the challenges of delivering electricity in Peterborough, he said -although that may not be true for PDI, a much smaller company.

But Coun. Dean Pappas reminded councillors that the provincial government plans to increase the proportion of Hydro One owned by private investors to 60 per cent.

He didn't think council should promise to debate CoPHI's recommendation before hearing from the public, at the November meetings.

If the public doesn't want their utility privatized then council shouldn't even consider it, he said. But Coun. Dan McWilliams said this was a "legacy" deal.

"We have to get the whole story out about why this will be good for the city," he said.

Mayor Daryl Bennett said that "story" includes a new Hydro One regional office for Peterborough and 30 new jobs.

"I see this as a very, very positive thing for our taxpayer - and that's who we represent," he said.

Coun. Lesley Parnell said she hasn't made up her mind about the potential sale but she wants as much information as she can get.

She said she's heard from constituents who are unhappy about the prospective sale, but she's also concerned about seniors who might like a freeze on their electricity distribution rate.

Hydro One has offered to reduce that rate by one per cent and then stay there for five years.

"I'm glad we have an offer," Parnell said. "Now we can make a final, educated decision on this - based on facts."

JKovach@postmedia.com

PUBLIC MEETING

What: The first in a series of PDI public meetings.

Date: Tuesday. Time: 5 until 8 p.m. Place: Canadian Canoe Museum, 910 Monaghan Rd.

Note: Free parking is available, or transit route 8 Monaghan takes you there.

More: Other open houses run for the same times Wednesday at Peterborough Lions Community Centre, 347 Burnham St.;

Thursday at Fire Station 3 at 839 Clonsilla Ave. and Thursday at the Activity Haven Senior Centre, 180 Barnardo Ave. For rural Peterborough Utilities customers, there are meetings Nov. 15 at the Asphodel-Norwood Community Centre and Nov. 16 at the Lakefield-Smith Community Centre.

Thousands of Ontario Residents Eligible for Home Energy Rebate Program
Source: CFTO
Oct 31, 2016 6: 28 PM (21)

Anchor 1: Need a new furnace or water heater or maybe some new windows?

Anchor 2: You might be one of thousands who qualify for a renovation rebate. CTV's John Musselman explains.

Reporter: Michael (inaudible) just installed a new furnace in his home last month. He's an expert in the field, operating his own heating and cool company. He says old furnaces are a big problem in Toronto and supports a provincial home energy program that would see thousands of residents offered a cash rebate to reduce their energy bills.

We think it's great program for gas savings, for electricity savings, and it helps the homeowner—tough times right now—when their gas bill is lowered and their Toronto Hydro bill is lowered, it makes a big difference.

Reporter: The premier made the announcement today at a home of a family that took advantage of the rebate through an energy audit of their home.

Premier Kathleen Wynne: We're going to help people get home audits, give them support in getting a home audit in the first place, and then help them get a rebate in the same way that Enbridge and Union Gas have been doing.

Reporter: An estimated 37,000 Ontario homeowners may be eligible to receive cash rebates to retrofit and

renovate their homes. Homeowners could be eligible to receive rebates ranging from $500 to $2,000. The government says it will pay for this program through its Green Investment Fund. The program takes effect today. John Musselman, CTV News.
Transcript captured directly from source. Some typographical errors or omissions are to be expected.

Wynne touts energy audit, retrofit rebates for 37,000 Ontario homeowners
CBC.CA News
Mon Oct 31 2016, 4:00pm ET
Section: Toronto
Byline: CBC News

A previously announced program to help an estimated 37,000 Ontario homeowners receive cash rebates to retrofit and renovate their homes went into effect Monday.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said the program is an effort by the province to reduce energy bills and combat climate change.

"Families want to make sure that their kids have great, warm places to play in the basement, even if their house is 150 years old," Wynne said outside the home of a Toronto family who received rebates for energy audits and retrofits for their home this year.

"They want to make sure they are paying the lowest cost possible for those homes."

Under the home energy program, Ontario homeowners could be eligible to receive rebates ranging from $500 to $2,000 for energy audits ? an assessment of a home to find ways to lower its energy bill ? and for renovations such as installing energy efficient furnaces, windows and insulation.

Wynne said Union Gas and Enbridge already provide similar rebate programs and the program will benefit those not necessarily customers of those companies. That means an additional 37,000 homeowners, she said.

The Ontario government will run the program in partnership with Enbridge and Union Gas. It is offered to homeowners who use natural gas, propane, oil or wood as their primary heating source.

The government said the $100 million needed for audits and retrofits over the next three years will come from its Green Investment Fund, a $325 million fund the province set up last year as a "down payment" on future revenues from its cap-and-trade plan designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It said the audits and retrofits are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1.6 million tonnes over the life span of the renovations.

Letter: Nuclear power needed
The Timmins Daily Press
Tue Nov 1 2016
Page: A4
Section: Opinion
Byline: Glenn Thibeault
Source: The Timmins Daily Press (this letter also appeared in the North Bay Nugget)

I recently read a surprising piece from Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner (published in the Oct. 24 edition of The Daily Press).

It was surprising to hear the leader of a party solely focused on reducing carbon emissions call for Ontario to cancel plans to reinvest in our nuclear power plants - Ontario's single largest source of clean and affordable electricity.

Over the past decade, Ontario completely phased out dirty coal as a source of electricity.

This is the largest climate change initiative in North America and our safe, reliable nuclear energy supply was part of what made it possible.

Refurbishment of the plants at Darlington and Bruce Power will ensure we continue to benefit from an abundant supply of clean nuclear energy for decades to come - and at a price that can't be beat.

Planning for these projects has taken five years, even building a full-scale mock reactor to fine-tune the refurbishment process.

These efforts are designed to make sure that refurbishments are done right, and finish on time and on budget.

Ontarians can also be proud that our nuclear industry is one of the best in the world, supporting thousands of jobs and helping grow our economy.

The Darlington refurbishment project alone will create up to 12,000 jobs in Ontario, and provide almost $15 billion in

economic benefits.

Mr. Schreiner is wrong to suggest all of this could simply be replaced with electricity imports from Quebec.

We are always looking for opportunities to improve electricity trade with our neighbours, including a recent deal with Quebec expected to save $70 million and reduce our emissions even further.

But imports on the scale that Mr. Schreiner suggests would require billions of dollars in costly system upgrades from both provinces, and still would not provide the sort of reliable, home-grown electricity that we get from nuclear.

Nuclear power has been providing cheap electricity to Ontario for more than 40 years.

It runs around the clock, 365 days a year, serving as the backbone of our electricity system.

And best of all, it has zero emissions that cause climate change.

As we look to the future, nuclear energy will continue to play a key role in our safe, clean, and reliable electricity supply.

Glenn Thibeault, Ontario Energy Minister

Hydro One completes acquisition of Great Lakes Power Electricity Transmission business
Canada Newswire
Mon Oct 31 2016, 4:21pm ET

TORONTO, Oct. 31, 2016 /CNW/ - Hydro One Limited (TSX: H) (“Hydro One”) announced today that its wholly-owned subsidiary Hydro One Inc. completed the purchase of Great Lakes Power Transmission LP (“Great Lakes Power Transmission”), following approval of the transaction by the Ontario Energy Board on October 13, 2016.

“The acquisition of Great Lakes Power Transmission fits with the strategic direction of the company while also acquiring a highly skilled and experienced team,” said Mayo Schmidt, President and CEO, Hydro One. “This acquisition translates into greater shareholder value and allows Hydro One to proudly serve even more communities by effectively growing both its asset and customer bases.”

Great Lakes Power Transmission will begin to operate under the name Hydro One Sault Ste. Marie in early 2017 and will continue to operate as a standalone licensed transmitter.

“On behalf of the Great Lakes Power Transmission team, I would like to thank Hydro One for welcoming our team,” said Duane Fecteau, Vice President, Operations, Great Lakes Power Transmission. “We will continue to deliver the high-quality transmission service our customers expect and are excited about the further opportunities that working with the expert and professional team at Hydro One will bring.”

About the Company:

Hydro One Limited (TSX: H) Hydro One is Ontario’s largest electricity transmission and distribution company headquartered in Toronto, Ontario with approximately $24 billion in assets and 2015 revenues of over $6.5 billion. Hydro One delivers electricity safely and reliably to over 1.3 million customers across the province of Ontario, and to large industrial customers and municipal utilities. Hydro One owns and operates Ontario’s approximately 29,000 circuit km high-voltage transmission network and an approximately 123,000 circuit km primary low-voltage local distribution network. For more information about Hydro One, visit www.HydroOne.com (www.hydroone.com)

SOURCE Hydro One Limited

Suncor sells lubricants business for $1.13B; Ontario wind power assets on block next
Peterborough Examiner
Tue Nov 1 2016
Page: B5
Section: Business
Byline: Geoffrey Morgan
Source: Financial Post

Suncor Energy Inc. is planning to sell all or parts of its Ontario wind power business following the $1.13-billion divestiture of its lubricants business Monday.

Suncor announced it had sold its Petro-Canada-branded lubricants business to Dallas-based HollyFrontier Corp. Monday morning for $1.13 billion and analysts say the company will focus next on selling off parts of its renewable energy portfolio.

Suncor confirmed it planned to sell all or parts of its wind power assets in Ontario, but planned to hold onto its wind generating capacity in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

“You will notice in our financial disclosures that we’ve now listed further assets with net book value of approximately $275 million as held for sale. This relates to the likely sale of some of our noncore wind assets within the next 12 months,” Suncor executive vicepresident and chief financial officer Alister Cowan said on an earnings call last week.

Suncor had previously said it planned to sell between $1.1 billion and $1.5 billion in assets. Citi Research analyst Fernando Valle said the company has already exceeded that target given the sale of its lubricants business and the recent sale of interests in its oil storage facilities near Fort McMurray.

Valle said the company is not under any pressure to sell offthe wind-power assets or to launch a sales process for other assets. He said the company has enough cash and earnings to increase its dividend.

“The No. 1 goal right now is to increase shareholder distributions,” Valle said of Suncor. The company indicated last week that it was considering an increase to its dividend or using its available cash to buy back its own shares.

Raymond James analyst Chris Cox said in a research note that the lubricants business generated $150 million US in earnings before taxes for Suncor and, based on those numbers, Suncor got fair value for the sale.

Cox noted the main asset in Suncor’s lubricants business was a large manufacturing facility in Mississauga, Ont. The entire lubricants business employed 700 people, and Suncor spokesperson Sneh Seetal said those employees will join HollyFrontier.

Valle said the Mississauga plant was not integrated into Suncor’s downstream business or strategy, which explains why the company decided to sell it. Some other oilsands companies, like Imperial Oil Ltd., have closer ties between their refineries and their chemicals or lubricants plants.

For Suncor, Valle said, the lubricants business was acquired in the Petro-Canada merger and is based in southern Ontario, while the company’s nearest refinery is farther east, in Montreal.

He also said the administrative costs of running the 700-person lubricants business were high relative to of the earnings it generated.

Suncor shares fell close to two per cent to $40.57 in mid-day trading in Toronto on Monday. The drop was roughly in line with the wider decline in SP/TSX Capped Energy Index, which was down 1.5 per cent, thanks to a drop in oil prices.

The West Texas Intermediate benchmark oil price fell to $46.94 US per barrel Monday - a 3.6 per cent drop.