

Media Scan – Barrie

(April – October 26, 2016)

Issues Summary:

There has been moderate media coverage in local print outlets related to energy. The Barrie Examiner ran several articles appearing in newspapers across the province focusing on:

- electricity prices and affordability (costs related to the Ontario Electricity Support Program, the 8% rebate for families, farms and small businesses)
- sale of Hydro One
- climate change (cap-and-trade, costs, natural gas, billing, etc.)
- renewable energy (suspension of the second round of the Large Renewable Procurement program, opposition to wind)

Local Issues

Electricity Prices

- According to data released by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) in August, more PowerStream customers had overdue payments at the end of 2015 compared to the year before. At the end of 2015, 535 low-income customer accounts owed about \$147,000, compared to 328 owing about \$102,000 at the end of 2014, according to the OEB. The other residential accounts owed less in 2015 than in 2014 - \$13 million compared to \$17 million - but the number of accounts went up from 55,000 to 56,000. Data submitted by PowerStream to the OEB is not broken down by municipality. It covers Alliston, Aurora, Barrie, Beeton, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Markham, Penetanguishene, Richmond Hill, Thornton, Tottenham and Vaughan.

Hydro One

- The Barrie Examiner ran several articles from the Orillia Packet and Times highlight the sale of Orillia Power Distribution Corporation (OPDC) to Hydro One for \$26.35 million. Hydro One is also proposing to build an advanced technological hub in Orillia. The application is for the back-up Ontario grid control centre/integrated systems operation centre (ISOC). That project will be constructed on the 16.41 acres of the Horne Business Park Hydro One purchased for \$3 million as part of the deal to bring the hub to Orillia, which also included the sale of the distribution arm of Orillia Power

Consumer Protection

- Barrie city council have approval to city staff to look into option on banning the sale or lease of heating, ventilating and air conditioning equipment, water heaters, water filtration systems and other related home energy products and services by door-to-door sales agents.