Message

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
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Subject: Today's News - Thursday, April 6, 2017

Today's News

powered by:

Date: Thursday, April 6, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Alectra Utilities recognized as 'Thought Leader' for pricing pilot

www.marketwired.com - Thu Apr 6 2017

NASHVILLE, TN--(Marketwired - April 05, 2017) - Alectra Utilities was acknowledged for its innovative, industry-leading work at the Peak Load Management Alliance (PLMA) conference held Tuesday in Nashville, Tennessee, receiving a Thought Leader ...

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thestar.com - Wed Apr 5 2017
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Hydro good for reserve funds: mayor

National Post - Thu Apr 6 2017
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Daily Observer (Pembroke) - Thu Apr 6 2017
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Greener electricity plans out there we can tap into

The Barrie Examiner - Thu Apr 6 2017
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Kingston lone municipality at cap and trade auction

Kingston Whig-Standard - Thu Apr 6 2017 **Page:** A3

Kingston was the only municipality to take part in Ontario's first cap and trade auction as part of the province's plan to curb greenhouse gas emissions. The March 22 auction, the first of 16 such auctions, brought in $472 million. Kingston was ...

Hydro-Quebec overcharged Quebecers for electricity: cabinet minister; Minister says Hydro-Quebec overcharged clients

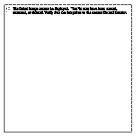
Canadian Press - Wed Apr 5 2017

Quebecers have unwittingly helped the province balance its budget in paying their electricity bills. Natural Resources Minister Pierre Arcand confirmed today that Hydro-Quebec has imposed higher rates than necessary ...

Demand for renewable power remains strong despite Trump policies; Globally, two-thirds of investment in power generation last year was dedicated to sustainable industries

theglobeandmail.com - Wed Apr 5 2017, 6:19pm ET
Byline:SHAWN McCARTHY

The global market for renewable power remains strong, even in the United States where President Donald Trump is looking to revive the fortunes of coal-fired generation, the founder of Bloomberg New Energy Finance said Wednesday. Around ...



Lawmakers broaden scrutiny of cybersecurity across U.S. energy delivery systems

Energy Monitor Worldwide - Thu Apr 6 2017, 8:37am ET
Byline: Energy Monitor Worldwide

Federal lawmakers on Tuesday expanded their examination of how well the U.S. electric grid is protected against cybersecurity threats to include the efforts of defending the nations natural gas pipelines against cyber terror.Given the ...

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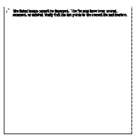

Alectra Utilities recognized as 'Thought Leader' for pricing pilot

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NASHVILLE, TN--(Marketwired - April 05, 2017) - Alectra Utilities was acknowledged for its innovative, industry-leading work at the Peak Load Management Alliance (PLMA) conference held Tuesday in Nashville, Tennessee, receiving a Thought Leader award in recognition of the success of the company's Advantage Power Pricing (APP) pilot. In partnership with Energate Inc., and funding from the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO),

Alectra Utilities' APP initiative has been a risk-free, technology-enabled dynamic pricing program designed to provide residential customers with significant savings. APP offers customers a low price of 5.9¢/kWh of electricity for off-peak periods and a variable price during the on-peak period (weekdays, 3 p.m. - 9 p.m.), while equipping them with the tools required to better manage their energy use.

The program gave participants the opportunity to save up to $300 a year by paying a very low price for electricity during 82% of the week. The PLMA Awards recognize industry leaders who create innovative ideas, methods, programs and technologies that support customer needs, mitigate price risks and support successful grid integration.

"We are thrilled to receive this recognition from PLMA," said Brian Bentz, President and CEO at Alectra. "Advantage Power Pricing is one of the many unique offerings we have developed to assist our customers with adapting to the tremendous changes occurring in Ontario's energy industry."

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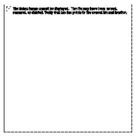

Bonus pay for Ontario Power Generation's CEO set to double next year

thestar.com - Wed Apr 5 2017
Byline: Rob Ferguson

In a sneak peek at the Sunshine List that will come out this time next year, corporate filings reveal Ontario Power Generation chief executive Jeff Lyash will see his compensation jump to more than $1.53 million.

That's up from $1.16 million on the 2016 public sector salary disclosure list (www.thestar.com) of $100,000-plus earners released a few days ago.

Securities filings show Lyash's base salary will hold steady at $775,000 for 2017, but his incentive pay, stemming from 2016, will rise to $755,459 from $352,564 the previous year.

Progressive Conservative MPP Todd Smith flagged the increase Wednesday, charging it was "suspiciously left off the government's books."

But Treasury Board president Liz Sandals said the Sunshine List disclosure follows rules established when the former PC government of Mike Harris set up the list two decades ago to shed light on public-sector salaries.

"What is reported is what is actually paid in a calendar year," she told reporters, noting the legal requirement is to post the amount on a public servant's T4 income tax slip.

Incentives are based on performance measures from the prior year, so the Sunshine List for 2016 reports salary for that year and incentive pay based on the previous year's performance, Sandals said.

"Nothing is going unaccounted for."

Lyash is now in charge of shepherding the massive $12.8-billion refurbishment of the Darlington nuclear power plant (www.thestar.com) , which the government is pressuring him to deliver on time and on budget.

The Sunshine List data on his compensation did not include more detailed elements from the OPG statement of executive compensation, also made public last Friday. This includes $460,000 in pension value and $38,138 in other income. The securities filing lists total compensation for Lyash at $2.03 million.

"These high salaries, bonuses and pension perks are indefensible," said New Democrat MPP Catherine Fife.

Energy Minister Glen Thibeault said Lyash has earned every penny, particularly as it relates to the Darlington refurbishment.

"Right now, we're ahead of schedule and below budget. That's thanks to the expertise that he has, that he's brought from his other jobs in the U.S.," Thibeault added.

"We still recognize that these salaries are high . . . , but we are also acknowledging that these people come with some expertise that is very, very important for us to recognize and retain."

Salaries for executives in the electricity sector are dwarfed by costs in the system and account for "not even a cent" on hydro bills, Thibeault said.

He and Sandals accused the Conservatives of trying to divert attention from their lack of a plan to cut hydro rates, given that the Liberal government has promised to cut rates 25 per cent starting this summer.

That includes waiving the 8 per cent provincial portion of the HST, which took effect in January.

PC Leader Patrick Brown said Monday that his party's plan is now on the back burner (www.thestar.com) , but will be released before the June 2018 election.

Brown and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath have been critical of the government's hydro-rate-cut plan (www.thestar.com) , which will cost $25 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years, as recent costs of modernizing the electricity system are spread over a longer time.

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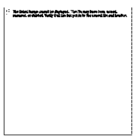

Hydro good for reserve funds: mayor

National Post - Thu Apr 6 2017
Byline: Doug Alexander
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Toronto Mayor John Tory said he's confident a new investment body being set up to manage "billions of dollars" of the city's reserves would view the Toronto Hydro Corp. utility "a good investment" for Canada's biggest city.

City council last week agreed to establish an independent board to manage investments of its reserve funds, thanks to a change in provincial rules allowing municipalities to broaden investments beyond government-backed bonds, treasury bills and bank deposits. The move means the city can form a body like the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, the nation's largest pension fund, that would be free of political interference, according to Tory.

The mayor said an additional investment in Toronto Hydro, possibly in the form of equity or debt, would be appropriate for the new agency. The city-owned utility has been cited in staff reports as a possible sale target to boost funds for the city.

"We believe very confidently they would look at an investment in Hydro, our own owned asset, and look at the return we would get," Tory said Tuesday in an interview at Toronto's Bloomberg office, suggesting an investment of "a couple hundred million dollars" in the utility. "If they look at the return we'd get, they look at the security of that investment, they would say, 'Yes, that's a good investment for the people of the city of Toronto'."

City council earmarked $557,500 as an interim budget for the investment board and is looking to recruit members for the body.

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Impact of Ontario's new hydro plan on Oakville businesses not yet clear: Chamber

Oakville Beaver - Wed Apr 5 2017
Byline: Nathan Howes

Although the Oakville Chamber of Commerce applauds the Ontario government for taking steps to scale back rising hydro costs for businesses, it is still unclear how local businesses will benefit.

That's according to Chamber president John Sawyer, who made the remarks Thursday, March 30 following a roundtable meeting in Oakville with Ontario Minister of Minister Glenn Thibeault.

The closed discussion, attended by Sawyer, Chamber members, Oakville MPP and Ontario Labour Minister Kevin Flynn and Thibeault, was to talk about the Province's Fair Hydro Plan, which will start this summer.

It will lower electricity bills by 25 per cent, on average, for residential customers and small businesses, as part of a system restructuring.

It aims to ensure greater fairness and comes in the wake of a hue and cry about the soaring hydro rates experienced in recent years.

The 25 per cent includes an already announced eight per cent rebate introduced in January.

As part of this plan, rate increases over the next four years would be held to the rate of inflation for everyone.

When the Oakville Beaver asked Sawyer after the meeting if any Chamber members had concerns on the new plan, he said more clarification is needed, but if there is a criticism, it's to "get us the details" quickly, so they can be given to members for review.

"We're still waiting for some clarification on what it actually means to business. Those details are being sorted out," said Sawyer.

He noted there was a "real diversity" of Oakville businesses represented in the roundtable discussion - from small manufacturing and retail operations to "giants," such as Ford Motor Company of Canada and Siemens.

"It was very good for the minister to hear them directly, which is why we do this. He was very good at answering the questions directly. We know our voice has been heard," said Sawyer.

Because some Oakville Chamber members didn't know if they qualified for the 25 per cent reduction, Thibeault said the meeting allowed him to clarify - "If you're a time-of-use customer, just like you are at home, if your business is a time-of-use customer, you will also see the 25 per cent reduction."

He also encouraged small businesses to take advantage of money- and energy-saving programs offered through local utility companies, including Oakville Hydro.

While Opposition Leader, head of the Ontario New Democrats Party (NDP), Andrea Horwath has publicly criticized the plan for not offering relief for hospitals, Thibeault offered a rebuttal at Thursday's media scrum.

He said hydro costs represent just one per cent of a hospital's operating budget.

"Yes, their bills have gone up just like everyone else's in the province, but you haven't heard any hospital come out and say there are direct layoffs or anything to do with that because of electricity bills," said Thibeault.

He noted Sudbury's hospital participated in a local utility energy-saving program that cost $275,000, but it received a significant portion of it back and is now saving $500,000 a year on hydro.

He then stated hospitals, schools and municipalities, in general, will see a four per cent reduction in cost as a result of the plan.

"It's a modest reduction, but it still is something coming off," said Thibeault.

"While we recognize rates have gone up, this wasn't an issue we were hearing from many of the hospitals, but we did put programs in place to help them."

Oakville Mayor Rob Burton, a member of Halton Healthcare's board of directors, confirmed hydro accounts for a small percentage of a hospital's operating budget.

He also noted Halton Healthcare has received increased funding to reflect growth, so "we've been well-looked after in the hospital sector, as of late."

"We run three hospitals (Halton Healthcare). Hydro costs have actually never come up. There are important issues in front of us and this isn't one of them," Burton told the Beaver Friday, March 31.

Hydro isn't an issue for the Town either, according to Burton, as it is converting its streetlights to high-efficiency, light-emitting diodes (LED), which is almost complete. Oakville is saving "so much money that it's not an issue for us, either."

"This government has been very good about dealing with issues and solving them for us. I'm marveled that our government, (which) could do so much good, could be ranked so low in the polls," said Burton.

While Thibeault acknowledged the Ontario Liberals' popularity numbers have dropped because of hydro costs, he said it doesn't govern based on "where we are in the polls, we govern by what we think is best for the people of Ontario."

"It was never too late, in my opinion, to do what is right for the people of Ontario. For us, that's why we acted. We've been doing this for awhile," said Thibeault.

"This plan, right now, helps us bring forward that 25 per cent relief - the single-largest electricity bill rate reduction in Ontario's history."

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Green Energy Act Monumental Disaster For Liberals

Daily Observer (Pembroke) - Thu Apr 6 2017
Byline: John Yakabuski
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After feeling the pressure for months, if not years, Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government finally had to admit that its so-called Green Energy Act has amounted to a monumental financial disaster for Ontario ratepayers.

Without admitting it, the premier has proven that the auditor general was right when she stated that Ontario electricity customers have paid $9.2 billion more for electricity than needed. (And that report only covered up until 2016.) With an election scheduled for June 2018, Kathleen Wynne knew she had to take significant steps to reduce people's electricity bills across the province.

On the surface, a 25 per cent reduction on one's bill is going to look pretty good. But as they say, the devil is always in the details. We have been calling for fundamental changes in energy policy for years because the only way to stop the prices from skyrocketing is to stop doing things the way they have been done for years. In that regard, the Liberals have made no change whatsoever. The reduction is basically a remortgaging of a bad deal; it is essentially overpaying for a house, not being able to make the payments and going to the bank to renegotiate the length of the mortgage. All of the energy contracts that were in place before the reduction will still be in place. In fact, the Liberals are continuing to sign new ones even as you read this.

This will only result in continued upward pressure on rates. The Liberals are hoping that the 25 per cent cut will result in a grateful response from the electorate. I, for one, am very happy to see this cut because relief was badly needed. But there is something people shouldn't forget: while Kathleen Wynne is going to legislate a further 17 per cent reduction (on top of the eight percent off from the HST rebate) it is the decisions of this Liberal government that caused the rates to go up in the first place. Of all the money you have overpaid during the last several years for electricity, not one penny will be coming back.

Even though the Liberals are to blame, the ratepayer still pays the bill. If I am to draw an analogy, it's as if several years ago the Liberal government took your car and is now coming back baring a gift of a bicycle and expecting you to be grateful.

Some of the costs being removed from electricity bills will be placed on the tax bill. Here is a breakdown of costs added to your tax bill: $1 billion per year to finance the removal of the provincial portion of the HST; $833 million per year to pay for a new suite of rebate programs. And added to the energy bill: $25 billion in total interest over 30 years to refinance the debt.

Some things that could have been done, which the government chose not to do, that would have at least given an indication it was prepared to stop repeating the same mistakes are: to stop signing contracts for energy that we don't need (at above-market prices); stop selling electricity at a massive loss to neighbouring jurisdictions; stop allowing water to pass over our hydroelectric dams without generating electricity while we pay excessive prices to developers of wind and stop the further sale of shares of Hydro One.

As I wrote earlier, with an election expected next June, I suspect that there will be additional attempts by this government to play more shell games and continue their sleight-of-hand tactics in order to try and dupe the people. I know the people are smarter than that. John Yakabuski is the MPP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke

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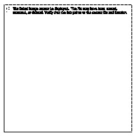

Green energy is not to blame for high electricity bills

Oshawa This Week - Wed Apr 5 2017

It is not difficult to find examples of news or political commentators blaming solar and wind energy for skyrocketing hydro bills in Ontario. It is both irresponsible and deceitful, however, to place the blame entirely at the feet of green power, or even the Liberal government.

The roots of high power prices in Ontario are deep, and they run through long seams of mismanagement from both Liberal and Conservative governments since the 1980s. Only the NDP government under Bob Rae managed to temporarily abate the problem by initiating 10 years of price controls in the 1990s. In the end, it is the high cost of nuclear power, the relative inefficiency of natural gas, a misguided multi-party government addiction to Ontario energy sovereignty, and just good old inflation that are to blame for your high energy bill - not green energy.

It would be perfectly acceptable to pay more money for green power if that were the case. Low hydro prices for most of the 20th century were achieved at the expense of the environment. The ensuing pollution, according to most published studies, is now having an overall negative impact on health, food production, economic performance, and is requiring us to use more energy for heating and cooling our homes. The last issue is contributing to a power price inflation. The demographic that will suffer the most is our children's generation. Environmental economists now admit that baby boomers simply did not pay the true cost for power in the 20th century and these costs are now being off-loaded onto current and future generations.

It would be expected that clean power will cost consumers a bit more money. However, clean power is not to blame for Ontario's current hydro prices. According to a recent study by the organization Environmental Defence, wind and solar combine for only 12 per cent of the average Ontario household's power bill. The largest cost in your bill is actually for the delivery of electricity, not its production. But as far as electricity production is concerned, nuclear is the largest cost and natural gas is second. The legacy of cost over-runs for construction of nuclear plants and now their refurbishment are the main culprits.

Certainly, Feed-in Tariff (FIT) contracts with green energy producers do commit the government to pay more for wind and solar than the market rate, but this investment has created lopsided benefits compared with its impact on power bills. Another Environmental Defence study estimates about 180,000 direct and indirect jobs were created by the sector. Other forms of power generation, such as nuclear, do of course create jobs as well, but at a relatively higher price going into the future. Largely due to innovation stimulated by FIT programs, solar is projected to be the lowest cost method of energy production within 10 years. Meanwhile, Liberal and Conservative government persistence in building and refurbishing nuclear generation saddles bill-payers with unnecessarily high rates. All this while very cheap hydroelectricity is available for Ontario to purchase from just across the Quebec border, and cheap FIT-free solar will be readily available in the very near future.

- Dr. Timothy MacNeill is with the political science program in the faculty of social science and humanities at UOIT

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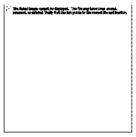

Greener electricity plans out there we can tap into

The Barrie Examiner - Thu Apr 6 2017
Byline: Erich Jacoby-Hawkins
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Over the past decade or more, Ontario's electricity prices have steadily risen.

Once a bastion of too-cheap electricity, far below national or world averages, Ontario's prices are now more in line with global rates, which has been painful for a population long accustomed to receiving subsidized electricity for a relative pittance.

Because old habits are hard to break with infrastructure already in place, we seems stuck with paying the bill whatever it is, causing cries to turn back the clock and lower rates again.

If only it were so simple. Of course, this creates huge political pressure, so both the Liberal government and the New Democratic Party opposition party have advanced plans to lower bills and the Progressive Conservative opposition has promised their own plan soon.

However, none of these plans seem to do much to truly lower the real cost of providing electricity. All they do is push it off to future generations, or move it from the power bill to the tax bill, still leaving us (or our children) to pay, in what I've called The Game of Shells.

What it comes down to is that there are only three real ways to reduce electricity prices: produce electricity at lower cost, buy it from other places for lower prices, or simply use less of it. Cancelling existing commitments, as we learned with gas plants, is either impossible or horribly expensive.

We can't just wave a magic wand and make cheaper power. Climate pressures mean we must shift off the old "cheap" fossil fuels like coal and natural gas or pay a premium for carbon emissions.

Nuclear brands itself as an affordable "carbon-free" source, but always costs far more than expected and provides less power than promised, years behind schedule.

A big part of today's high costs cover vast nuclear power overruns from the past. Large-scale new hydro is challenging, while wind, solar and small hydro are becoming more affordable, but present challenges in matching supply and demand which require better management or new power storage facilities.

The best we can do in this area is avoid committing to costly new nukes and curtail expensive refurbishment or life-extension operations at existing plants, instead allowing them to retire on schedule.

On the other hand, there is a huge opportunity for us to use more clean, cheap hydro from Quebec. Not only is this a better deal than pouring more money down our own nuclear pit, it also lets us balance peaks and valleys of renewable generation by "banking" power behind large hydro dams, essentially storing surplus renewable energy until needed.

There are other technologies we can implement within Ontario allowing us to store energy between when it is produced and when we need it, narrowing the expensive supply-demand gap.

The most important and reliable way to reduce power bills will always be to use less to begin with. No matter the price, the less you use, the less you pay. While government and opposition plans feature some meagre conservation measures, we need a major commitment of resources to upgrading our business and household technology so we can more efficiently use electricity, or draw more of it at times of low demand, which will reduce overall costs.

Luckily, there is another opposition party which has long promoted solutions like this, and this weekend you can be a part of that conversation. Green Party of Ontario leader Mike Schreiner will be in the region on Sunday ready to listen to your ideas and share his on how we can truly lower electricity costs, not just move them around. He'll be at the Innisfil Public Library Lakeshore Branch's Community Room from 1:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m., then at the Grilled Cheese Social Eatery at 53 Dunlop St. E. in Barrie at 6 p.m. You are welcome to attend either (or both) of these events and discuss concrete actions to lower Ontario's electricity costs.

Take this chance to be proactive and seize the (electrical) power in your own hands. Erich Jacoby-Hawkins serves on the boards of Living Green and the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. Read and comment on this and other Root Issues at www.ErichtheGreen.ca.

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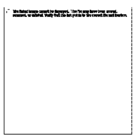

Public info session scheduled on future of Wasaga Hydro

Wasaga Sun - Wed Apr 5 2017
Byline: Ian Adams

A public hearing on the future of Wasaga Distribution will be held in late May.

At its March 28 meeting, Wasaga Beach council approved a process for public comment on the fate of the local electricity distribution company, culminating in a public meeting in late May at the RecPlex.

Innovative Research Group has also been hired to undertake a public opinion survey.

The town has also contracted lawyer Mark Rodger to assist in setting up the session. The cost of the research company and Rodger's expertise will be $45,000.

The information session was initially slated for later in April, but was held off for a month at the request of Coun. Sylvia Bray, who wanted more time for snowbirds to get back from sunny climes.

She, along with several members of the public, also raised a concern about the panellists selected to speak at the public information session and whether the positions represented by the panellists could be considered slanted toward selling the utility.

The town's special projects co-ordinator Jenny Legget, the staff lead on the public consultation process, said it was possible to expand or amend the speakers' panel. At least one panellist represents a municipality that decided to keep its electricity distribution utility, she said.

Rodger's involvement on the panel also raised some eyebrows, as he did the analysis that led the board of Wasaga Distribution to recommend the utility be sold.

Council has not yet made a decision on the utility's future.

"I have no disrespect for the gentleman, for his knowledge and experience, but … he is in the business of representing the legal proceedings for sales and mergers," noted former councillor Stan Wells, who addressed council during the comment period. "He represents a direction, and should be excluded from any part of the panel."

He also suggested having a member of Wasaga Distribution's senior staff on the panel.

Deputy Mayor Nina Bifolchi took another stab at convincing council to put an immediate stop to the process, similar to a motion she presented in the fall. The vote failed, 3-4.

"I usually support public education meetings, but I see this as an attempt to convince the public and promote the sale of Wasaga Distribution," she said, suggesting if the town wanted to gauge public opinion it could hold a referendum as part of the 2018 municipal election.

She also questioned the public opinion survey that would be conducted of 200-to-300 people when council already has a petition with 8,000 names against a sale.

"I don't believe there's any more information we need, or are waiting on, but rather an opportunity to put together a panel to convince this community to sell."

Other councillors, however, believed a public information session was necessary.

"We need to have an open session so we can have our questions answered," said Coun. Bonnie Smith, who also supported Bifolchi's motion. "It's fair to everyone to hear what the future of hydro would be, what the scenarios would be if we keep it, and what the scenarios would be if we don't."

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Sunshine List: Hydro's good if you work in it; bad if you don't

Pickering News Advertiser - Wed Apr 5 2017

The bloat that is the provincial public service bureaucracy just got a lot more bloated in time for 2017 and, by the looks of things, isn't about to abate any time soon, certainly not in the realm of hydro generation.

Yes, it's that special time of year when the provincial government drops its annual Sunshine List of its public-sector salaries of $100,000 or above. And, in 2016, the government set a record, albeit a dubious one, by having 123,410 reach those magical paydays. That's up from 115,431 last year. And, when you add that to the benefit packages, it's nearly $16 billion in salaries paid out of the public purse.

If you're a private-sector worker, your head must be spinning at this snapshot of who's earning what within the public-sector ranks. And, when you look at the sheer numbers of those making well above that $100,000 benchmark, the mind truly boggles.

The usual suspects are out in front of the salary parade, with Jeff Lyash, CEO of Ontario Power Generation (OPG), hauling in $1,155,900 in pay and $9,800 in taxable benefits. That pay packet wouldn't look so lavish if it was comparable to the hydro CEOs of other jurisdictions. But, the fact is CEOs of Hydro-Quebec and BC Hydro earn less than half that much in yearly stipend, making Lyash's compensation, well, bloated.

And, to add insult to injury, if the OPG board of directors has its way, Lyash could be making in the neighbourhood of $1.5 million next year. It's truly lavish compensation, especially when viewed through the crucible of the runaway train that is hydro rates in Ontario.

Moreover, plenty of others within the ranks of OPG are doing well, with 7,732 making at or above the Sunshine List's $100,000 benchmark. That figure represents the most from any one organization on the provincial Sunshine List.

Want even more salt in those wounds? Mayo Schmidt, the CEO of Hydro One, is paid $4.5 million by the province, but his salary is not recorded on the Sunshine List this year, as the government is in the process of selling off Hydro One and is no longer obligated to disclose the salary.

With hydro rates spiking, one would think the provincial government would be willing and able to rein in salaries from within OPG to give beleaguered hydro ratepayers an even bigger break than the 25 per cent promised reduction.

But, as you can see by the continued generosity directed toward OPG on this year's Sunshine List, there's no appetite for that.

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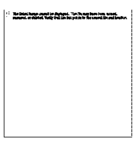

Kingston lone municipality at cap and trade auction

Kingston Whig-Standard - Thu Apr 6 2017 **Page:** A3

Kingston was the only municipality to take part in Ontario's first cap and trade auction as part of the province's plan to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

The March 22 auction, the first of 16 such auctions, brought in $472 million.

Kingston was joined in the auction by other bidders, including Union Gas, Enbridge Gas, Imperial Oil, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, the University of Guelph, Ontario Power Generation, Apotex, Labatt, BP Canada Energy Group, Shell Energy North America and Suncor Energy Products Partnership.

To take part in the cap and trade system, the city in February arranged for a $4 million letter of credit from the Toronto-Dominion Bank, that will be submitted as a bid guarantee prior to purchasing emissions credits.

Ontario plans to link its cap-andtrade system with a joint Quebec-California market next year.

The system aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions puts caps on the amount of pollution companies in certain industries can emit. If they exceed those limits, they must buy an equal number of allowances at auction or from other companies that come in under their limits.

The government announced Monday that almost 25.3 million allowances were sold for 2017 at a price of $18.08 and 812,000 future greenhouse gas emission allowances were sold for $18.07.

The provincial Liberal government hopes the quarterly auctions will bring in $1.9 billion a year, to be invested in programs that reduce emissions and help businesses and consumers adapt to a low-carbon economy.

Since Jan. 1, cap and trade has added 4.3 cents per litre to the price of gasoline and about $80 a year to natural gas home heating costs, in addition to indirect costs that will be passed onto consumers.

The next auction is on June 6.

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Hydro-Quebec overcharged Quebecers for electricity: cabinet minister; Minister says Hydro-Quebec overcharged clients

Canadian Press - Wed Apr 5 2017

Quebecers have unwittingly helped the province balance its budget in paying their electricity bills.

Natural Resources Minister Pierre Arcand confirmed today that Hydro-Quebec has imposed higher rates than necessary on users over several years.

Since 2008, subscribers have overpaid the provincially owned utility an estimated $1.4 billion.

Arcand told reporters that money helped to pay down the province's deficit.

Now that Quebec has balanced its budget, Arcand says Hydro-Quebec will have to be more modest when it seeks rate increases.

The province's energy board evaluates the utility's request for rate increases.

This year, electricity rates went up 0.7 per cent in Quebec as of April 1.

Arcand says the overpayments mean rate increases will be quite low going forward.

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Demand for renewable power remains strong despite Trump policies; Globally, two-thirds of investment in power generation last year was dedicated to sustainable industries

theglobeandmail.com - Wed Apr 5 2017, 6:19pm ET
Byline:SHAWN McCARTHY

The global market for renewable power remains strong, even in the United States where President Donald Trump is looking to revive the fortunes of coal-fired generation, the founder of Bloomberg New Energy Finance said Wednesday.

Around the world, two-thirds of investment in electricity generation was renewable power, and only a third in coal- and gas-fired generation last year, Michael Liebreich told the Globe Finance clean-technology conference in Toronto.

While renewable investment fell slightly, the reduction in cost for solar and wind technology resulted in a greater amount of capacity being added than in 2015, despite the drop in value.

"There is nothing alternative about alternative energy," Mr. Liebreich said. Bloomberg New Energy is a highly-regarded global advisory firm that focuses on low-carbon energy.

In an interview, Mr. Liebreich predicted there would be only a modest impact from Mr. Trump's executive order aimed at rolling back former president Barack Obama's regulations that would reduce emissions in the power sector by cutting coal use.

Major utilities continue to announce coal-plant closures, as they boost investment in renewable generation and natural gas. Florida Power & Light Co. of Miami announced this week it would add 1,500 megawatts of solar power over the next six years, while it will close an aging 1,250-megawatt coal station. It has announced three coal-plant closures in the past three years.

Reuters surveyed 32 utilities with operations in the 26 states that sued Mr. Obama's administration to block its Clean Power Plan, the main target of Mr. Trump's executive order. The bulk of them have no plans to alter their years-long shift away from coal, suggesting demand for the fuel will keep falling despite Mr. Trump's efforts.

The utilities gave many reasons, mainly economic: natural gas - coal's top competitor - is cheap and abundant; solar and wind power costs are falling; state environmental laws remain in place; and the President's regulatory rollback may not survive legal challenges, Reuters said.

Mr. Liebreich said new coal cannot compete with natural gas, renewable sources or even energy efficiency, especially where there are state efforts to regulate its environmental impacts.

"There are some very old power plants in the U.S., and there's a retirement process that is going to happen anyway," he said. "One thing is for sure: I don't meet many investors running around trying to put together financing for a new coal-fired power stations just because there is a four-year or eight-year regulatory holiday."

The bigger impact from Mr. Trump's retreat on climate change would be the loss of U.S. leadership in the world, he said. Mr. Obama paved the way for a successful Paris climate summit in 2015 by reaching climate deals with China and India that promised clean-energy co-operation.

India is considering whether to dramatically expand its coal fleet in order to bring power to its energy-starved population.

Mr. Liebreich said China and Europe will not be able to fill that global leadership gap.

"You have to envision an energy leapfrog [bypassing fossil technology], and then you have to help India to achieve it," he said. "Who has the credibility to do that? Who has the technology, the diplomatic heft, the credibility to say to political leaders in India, you don't have to develop that coal?

"The leadership that the U.S. has brought to that effort has been invaluable," he said.

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Lawmakers broaden scrutiny of cybersecurity across U.S. energy delivery systems

Energy Monitor Worldwide - Thu Apr 6 2017, 8:37am ET
Byline: Energy Monitor Worldwide

Federal lawmakers on Tuesday expanded their examination of how well the U.S. electric grid is protected against cybersecurity threats to include the efforts of defending the nations natural gas pipelines against cyber terror.Given the interdependency of natural gas and electricity, it is imperative that these energy delivery systems are adequately protected against the increasing number of cyberattacks, said U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which held a hearing on the topic.Dave McCurdy, president and CEO of the American Gas Association, agreed and said, Its critically important that policy discussions around [this] interdependency address the reliability of both the gas and electric systems in a coordinated manner, yet recognize the differences between the industries.One big challenge facing both electric and natural gas utilities is successfully protecting their energy distribution systems from cyberattacks. Cybersecurity partnerships between the federal government and industry operators are helping both move forward, witnesses said.McCurdy, a former U.S. Democratic congressman from Oklahoma who served as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said that technological advances over the last 20 years have made natural gas utilities better able to serve customers via web-based programs and tools, but also made them an attractive target for increasingly sophisticated cyber terrorists.In response, McCurdy said, gas utilities have for several years maintained a valuable pipeline transportation security partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), specifically the Transportation Security Administration (TSA)the regulator for pipeline securityand with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). TSA partners instead of regulates, while DOE develops cybersecurity practices, tools and guidelines to address risks and threats and helps identify and solve pipeline security challenges, he said.These non-regulatory security partnerships are built on cooperation, mutual trust and the recognition that a top-down cybersecurity regulatory regime would be counterproductive to industry security. Simply put, our adversaries move faster than any regulatory checklist so its better to partner on protecting our systems than to rely on static compliance programs, McCurdy said.He warned the senators against giving DOE any additional authority over pipeline transportation systems security because there would be program overlap with existing TSA programs. Likewise, shifting this security regime from TSA to DOE would ignore the pipeline expertise and industry knowledge TSA has built over a decade of partnership and require a program rebuild at DOE, he said.Reshuffling our government cybersecurity partners will also not make us any safer, McCurdy said.Reliable delivery of electricity is also a priority for DOE, testified Patricia Hoffman, acting assistant secretary of the DOEs Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability.It does need to be strengthened and improved and DOE will continue to work with public and private partners to protect against physical and man-made threats, she said.Its critical to be proactive and cultivate what I call an ecosystem of resilience: a network of producers, distributors, regulators, vendors and public partners acting together to enhance our ability to prepare, respond and recover, said Hoffman, adding that DOE supports industry functions to do this in myriad ways, including by sharing actionable intelligence with energy owners and operators in a timely manner.But to support the cyber posture of the nation we do need better information sharing and use of best practices to raise our security maturity, Hoffman said. A shared endeavor requires shared partnerships.Biggest gripe: info-sharingThe single most important aspect of cybersecurity policy remains an effective government-private sector partnership based on open information sharing, witnesses said.Specifically, to better protect these systems, industry needs better cybersecurity information from government partners delivered in real-time; quicker dissemination of classified threat information; and a closer working relationship with not only sector-specific agencies like DOE, but also with the law enforcement and intelligence communities.The process by which industry leaders receive security clearances also needs to be reformed, McCurdy said. Despite my existing Department of Defense security clearance, I still havent received a DOE security clearance I applied for a year ago, he added.Expanding what and how classified information is shared will be a cybersecurity challenge going forward, testified Gerry Cauley, president and CEO of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, known as NERC, the Atlanta-based nonprofit institution that regulates and oversees the reliability and security of the North American electrical grids.NERC already has in place its Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC), which serves as the information sharing conduit between the electricity industry and government for cyber and physical security threats, especially during rapidly evolving security events.The E-ISAC also has partnered with DOE on the Cybersecurity Risk Information Sharing Program (CRISP). Managed by the E-ISAC, CRISP uses innovative technology and leverages DOEs analytical capabilities to provide info-sharing of unclassified and classified threat information. It also develops situational awareness tools to enhance the electricity sectors ability to identify, prioritize and coordinate the protection of their critical infrastructure, Cauley testified.How can CRISP share highly classified information in a more timely fashion while still protecting the content, asked U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV).We have to figure out how to work on a shared national problem together, Cauley answered. It starts with two things: getting industry and the top levels of government together on a plan for managing our assets together and protecting them; and how do we become part of a shared community in which we trust one another? We have to find a way to fight this war together.This is a complex machine were talking about modifying, said Duane D. Highley, president and CEO of the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation.Cyber warfare requires that the utilities have timely access to actionable information, Highley said. And while real-time sharing is great, both parties have to play.Most of the time we learn about threats from the private sector long before the government shares the information due to its classified nature, Highley said. Developing more mutual trust and getting more higher-level security clearances approved would help, he added.

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