Message

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

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Date: Monday, November 20, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Thibeault ready for 'tough fight'

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Glenn Thibeault isn't too concerned about a recent phone survey conducted for The Star by Oraclepoll that shows Sudburians are split almost evenly between the NDP, Liberals and Progressive Conservatives. The NDP's Jamie West is out in front, but ...

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$5K back in Town of Bracebridge coffers thanks to lighting initiative

Bracebridge Examiner - Sat Nov 18 2017 **Page:** 1

BRACEBRIDGE - The Town of Bracebridge picked up a hefty rebate thanks to a lighting initiative at the Bracebridge Sportsplex.

The Town of Bracebridge recently completed the first phase of their energy efficient lighting upgrade project at the Bracebridge Sportsplex. The second phase will see the replacement of the remaining non-energy efficient lighting throughout the building by the end of 2018.

Swantech Energy Solutions and Low's Power and Light supplied and installed the LED fixtures. The estimated reduction in energy consumption is 63 per cent on an annual basis. According to a Town of Bracebridge press release, when these energy savings are applied to the capital cost of the LED lights the estimated project payback is 2.44 years. Swantech Energy Solutions were also responsible for applying for, on behalf of the Town of Bracebridge, a Save on Energy Retrofit Program Rebate for this project.

Lakeland Power Distribution Ltd. confirmed that the Town of Bracebridge would receive a Save on Energy Retrofit Program Rebate in the amount of $5,280 plus HST and, to celebrate this partnership, a cheque was presented by Vince Kulchycki, Chief Operating Officer of Lakeland Holding Ltd. to Deputy Mayor Rick Maloney and Councillor Steve Clement of the Town of Bracebridge at the Bracebridge Sportsplex on Friday, Nov. 10.

"The Town of Bracebridge is continuing with these types of energy saving projects. We have switched our street lighting to LED and now this project at the Sportsplex," said Maloney. "We look forward to the savings and are excited about passing these savings onto taxpayers."

"Lakeland Power has aggressive energy targets ahead of them," said Chris Litschko, chief executive officer for Lakeland Power Distribution Limited. "In 2016, we entered the Independent Electricity System Operator's new Conservation First Framework where we are set to reduce over 15 Gigawatts of energy. This is a huge undertaking but we are confident that it is reachable target. We are proud to work with local businesses in assisting them to reduce costs."

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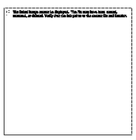

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Hydro comes begging; A sure sign that rates are going to go up, energy critic warns

Toronto Sun - Sat Nov 18 2017
Byline: Antonella Artuso
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One for a nearly 5% rate increase next year is a sure sign to hydro customers that their bills are headed skyward, Progressive Conservative Energy Critic Todd Smith says.

"Rates are going to up - you can guarantee it," Smith said Friday. "We all know that rates are going to skyrocket after the next election once the Liberals'unfair hydro plan ends."

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is currently mulling over a distribution rate increase requested by Hydro One that would increase bills by just over $140 a year by 2022.

Hydro One CEO Mayo Schmidt said in a speech this week that the utility needs an increase in its transmission rates to "keep the system stable and functioning" by replacing aging equipment.

Colin Nekolaichuk, a spokesperson for Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault, said the OEB has a mandate to protect the interest of hydro ratepayers, and in 2010 actually reduced Hydro One's distribution rates by 9%.

"Regardless of the outcome of any rate application before the OEB, electricity bills would not be impacted beyond the rate of inflation as per the Fair Hydro Plan," Nekolaichuk said in an email Friday.

The Kathleen Wynne government's Fair Hydro Plan reduced the average electricity bill by 25% this year, and promised four years of inflation rate increases which would likely hover around 2%.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said the Wynne government's selling off of the majority of previously publiclyowned Hydro One has hurt customers.

"They only did this to cook the books here in Ontario - it's not about people, it's not about hydro bills," Horwath said. "And we are paying it already and we're going to continue to pay for it."

Hydr One's attempts to improve its bottom line will benefit its shareholders, not its customers, she said.

The Ontario government has blamed soaring hydro bills over the last decade on the need to fix the electricity system's aging infrastructure, so why is Hydro One asking for rate increases to do the same thing, Smith said.

"They haven't modernized the system," Smith said.

"They've spent money rigging up these renewable energy projects and natural gas plants. They actually haven't improved the quality of the lines, the transmission lines, the distribution lines and the system infrastructure." aartuso@postmedia.com

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Why is Ontario addicted to wind power?; Our government's decisions make no sense and it isn't answering squestions

Toronto Sun - Sun Nov 19 2017
Byline: Jane Wilson
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Every time I am interviewed by the media, or speak at a public meeting, I am asked: Why is Ontario continuing to push ahead with its program of industrial-scale wind turbines and wind power, when all the facts seem to argue against it? I don't know. I don't understand why Ontario's Liberal government never did a cost-benefit analysis, or why it has ignored the admonitions of two auditors general about impacts and costs, or why it seems unable, or unwilling, to look at the real-world experience of its wind power experiment.

I don't know why the government signed contracts in 2016 for 600 megawatts of wind power when we already have a power surplus.

In 2016, Ontario paid $2.7 billion for generators of electricity from nuclear, gas and hydro not to produce power, because we were forced to accept wind power (when it shows up) to the grid.

In September, a new 100-megawatt wind power facility started commercial operation, but that same month, 42% of wind power in Ontario's west region was curtailed (surplus, not added to the grid).

Ontario's electricity customers paid for that power, anyway.

I don't know why the government keeps adding more new power, which adds costs to people's electricity bills, so much so that "energy poverty" is a new, sad phrase in Ontario.

The government claims to have reduced electricity bills by 25%, but it has done nothing to cut costs by cancelling contracts for unneeded power.

I don't know why we are adding more "green" power when Ontario is already "green" by most standards.

Ontario's engineers point out that more intermittent wind power means more natural gas backup, which means more fossil fuel use, not less.

I don't know why the government persists in saying wind power is good for the environment when its effect on the natural environment and wildlife is well known.

Last month, Ontario's environmental commissioner pointed out that no request to "kill, harm or harass" wildlife had been refused for four years - she cited wind power projects where development actually took precedence over environmental balance.

Finally, I don't know why the government is ignoring the thousands of reports of negative impacts from the huge, noise-producing turbines.

Between 2006 and 2014, the government received well over 3,100 formal reports of excessive noise and vibration, according to documents provided to Wind Concerns Ontario.

When the Green Energy Act was passed in 2009, the government already knew there were problems, but it pushed ahead anyway, going so far as to remove local land use planning power from municipalities seeking to protect their residents.

Of those thousands of reports, more than 50% received no response from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

Only 1% resulted in a priority response.

On the formal Pollution Incident Reports kept by the government, there is space to name the "client".

Pledge to protect Who might that be, for the ministry whose pledge it is to protect the environment and human health? Not the people of Ontario. On each report, the "client" listed is the wind power developer.

New noise protocols were released earlier this year but guess what? The newly contracted projects don't have to abide by the new rules.

There are concerns about the effect of the vibration from wind turbine construction and operation (picture a giant tuning fork stuck in the ground).

But the environment ministry appears to have abdicated its role as regulator, and relies instead on self-regulation by the multi-billion-dollar wind power industry.

What is the reason behind these social, economic and environment costs that so moves the Ontario government to keep pressing ahead with this problematic program? I don't know. The government is not answering.

Wilson is a Registered Nurse and health care writer; she is volunteer president of Wind Concerns Ontario, a coalition of 30 community groups and hundreds of Ontario citizens

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It costs more, but Ontario stays with renewable energy

Waterloo Region Record - Mon Nov 20 2017
Byline: Elmira Aliakbari and Ashley Stedman
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The Ontario government's rigorous pursuit of renewables has increased electricity costs far more than necessary.

The government recently released an update to its long-term energy plan, projecting that the cost of electricity for homes and businesses will keep rising over the next 20 years.

For example, the average monthly electricity bills for residents and large industrial customers in northern Ontario will jump 52 per cent.

Ontario's electricity prices are already the highest in Canada and among the highest in North America.

But despite the high prices, the government of Premier Kathleen Wynne recently reaffirmed its commitment to costly solar and wind power, which is distorting market prices at the expense of Ontario's current and future ratepayers.

Ontario's electricity market is a stark example of what happens when government picks technology "winners" and "losers."

The government chose wind and solar power over cheaper alternatives such as nuclear, hydroelectric or clean coal power. In fact, as documented in our recent study, a report from the Ontario Energy Board in 2016 found that nuclear and hydroelectric generators, despite providing the majority of electricity output in Ontario, received much lower rates than wind, solar and biofuel generators. Ontarians, then, paid less for nuclear and hydroelectric power than the renewable sources.

Between November 2016 and October 2017, the rate paid to wind generators ($140 per megawatt hour or MWh, a common unit for measuring power) was more than double that of hydro and nuclear generators. In addition, the rate paid to solar generators ($480 per MWh) was more than seven times the rate paid to nuclear generators ($66 per MWh) and more

than eight times the rate paid

to hydroelectric generators ($58 per MWh).

Clearly, there's a substantial price difference between the rates paid to wind, solar and biofuel generators, and the rates paid to other generators. The high cost for renewable sources is even more glaring when you consider that, in 2016, combined solar, wind and biomass generated less than seven per cent of electricity in Ontario.

And yet, between 2005 and 2015, the province increased its renewable capacity - solar, wind and bioenergy - by 18 per cent.

But because the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow, the government also had to secure more natural gas capacity as a backup to renewable sources, increasing Ontario's gas capacity by nine per cent.

As a result, the province realized a 26 per cent increase in capacity from 2005 to 2015. Meanwhile, the demand for electricity declined, partly due to rising electricity costs. The increase in capacity coupled with lower electricity demand has resulted in significant oversupply, which must often be exported at prices below cost.

From 2008 to 2016, residential electricity prices in Ontario increased by 71 per cent - more than double the national average. To make matters worse, a recent study shows Ontario's skyrocketing electricity prices cost the province more than 74,000 manufacturing jobs between 2008 and 2015.

The government seems uninterested in meaningful policy reforms that would reduce electricity prices. Instead, with its so-called Fair Hydro Plan, the government hides the true costs of Ontario's energy policies by shifting some of the cost from electric bills onto current (and future) tax bills.

The unfortunate reality is Ontario residents and businesses will continue to see their electricity bills rise due to the government's poor policy decisions.

Kenneth P. Green is a senior director; Elmira Aliakbari and Ashley Stedman are analysts, at the Fraser Institute. Distributed by Troy Media

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Hospital coping with surging hydro rates; Bluewater Health projecting a $175,000 surplus

Sarnia Observer - Mon Nov 20 2017
Byline: Tyler Kula
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The rising cost of electricity in Ontario is having a substantial effect on hospital budgets.

Documents obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation show electricity bills have been on the rise at hospitals across Ontario over the last five years, most increasing 20-50 per cent in that time.

In Sarnia-Lambton, Bluewater Health's bill is up just over 40 per cent between 2012 and 2016, jumping $850,000 over that span to just under $3 million per year.

"How is Bluewater Health expected to manage their budget when electricity bills are rising by hundreds of thousands of dollars," said Christine Van Geyn, the federation's Ontario director in a press release.

"The more the hospital has to spend keeping their lights on, the fewer resources they have for patients."

The outliers include one hospital that saw its expense rise 125 per cent, and another that saw a 3.7-per-cent reduction, Van Geyn said in an email, noting she's not sure the reasons why.

The federation is pushing for structural changes to the electricity sector in Ontario, including an end to pricey solar and wind contracts, and improved oversight for nuclear projects. Meanwhile, Bluewater Health has been making energy efficiency upgrades - including automated heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment; and investing in new boilers, light-emitting diode (LED) lighting and heat wheels to recirculate air, said Samer Abou-Sweid, vice-president of operations with the hospital group.

Some of those projects have been ongoing for years, he said.

"We continue to look at more and more opportunities … you never stop," he said.

"I think once you stop you start falling behind."

Bluewater Health is projecting a $175,000 surplus by its yearend in March, which is essentially balanced considering its about $180-million total budget, Abou-Sweid said.

A $4.1-million provincial cash injection in March helped boost the amount of some procedures available, and offset some inflation.

"We knew about the increase in hydro rates so we budgeted for that and identified different ways across the hospital to try to still manage the budget despite the increase," Abou-Sweid said.

Other pressures on it and other Ontario hospitals include aging populations and more people seeking help for mental health, he said.

"I think all hospitals are feeling the pressure and they're working with the Ministry of Health on getting some support."

Earlier this year, Premier Kathleen Wynne rolled back the cost of electricity temporarily for residential ratepayers, ultimately increasing the long-term cost for short-term relief.

Rates for hospitals and other institutions were unaffected. tkula@postmedia.com

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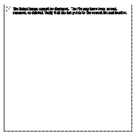

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GRCA unveils updated plans for Park Hill Dam power station

Cambridge Times - Thu Nov 16 2017 **Page:** 1

Cambridge residents had their say about Grand River Conservation Authority's proposed hydroelectric generating station to be added to the Park Hill Road dam in downtown Galt.

More than 35 people turned out to the second public information centre, held Wednesday (Nov. 15), as part of the project's required environmental assessment study.

In a nutshell the $5.2 million project involves building a 500 kilowatt generating station into the existing Park Hill Road dam, which would produce enough electricity to supply 560 homes. While the conservation authority has wanted to tap the Park Hill Road dam for electricity for many years, it was only able to finalize an agreement with Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator under its Feed-in-Tariff program last year.

After securing its contract, the authority has lost little time in pushing forward with its plans. Last February the authority hired WSP Consultants to undertake the environmental assessment.

With the completion of seasonal environmental studies, it's anticipated this first stage of the project will occur during the course of the next 12 months. The full project will take about five years to complete and will be commissioned and begin hydro production between 2021 and 2022.

During Wednesday's public information session, the authority provided an update on its plans along with the latest rendering on what the new power plant might look like.

Dwight Boyd, director of engineering explained there have been a number of challenges in designing the new power plant.

"Most of the plant will be buried underground and won't be seen, but we are also faced with a number of constraints in developing the design. It has to be flood proof, but we also didn't want it to rise above the existing floodwall and block the neighbour's view of the river. We also decided to build it in stone to fit in with the surrounding architecture."

Local architect Pat Simmons believes the project is a great idea, but more could be done with the esthetics of the structure.

"You can tell an engineer designed this," he said. "It's good that they've gone with stone, but paying a little more consideration to the design, like sloping the roof and doing something with the windows, wouldn't hurt."

A number of people attending the session also commented on the design of the

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structure. Boyd said the rendering is only the latest concept and further adjustments to the design can still be made.

Mention was also made that the lights on the new power station might be used to illuminate the dam at night.

"I think it's going to be wonderful. It blends in quite nicely with what's already there, and its great that they will be produce 'green' energy," said Andrea Hoba, an avid kayaker who drives 90 minutes to paddle the river.

Peter Rowe, came to learn more about the project, but he also questioned its need.

"With so much electricity being generated, why do we need this?" he asked.

Rowe contends that instead of building new power generating stations, the money might be better spent on the research and development of better batteries to store the electricity currently being produced.

The GRCA will use revenue from the new power station to pay back the money taken from its land use reserve fund to pay for the project. After that, revenue generated will be pumped into its various conservation programs.

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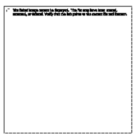

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Alectra sells utility shares back to Collingwood

Collingwood Enterprise-Bulletin - Fri Nov 17 2017 Page: A5

Alectra Utilities has decided to sell its 50% share in Collus PowerStream back to the Town of Collingwood, meaning that EPCOR will become the sole owner, purchasing 100% of the utility from Collingwood.

In 2016, council decided to sell its 50% stake in Collus and through an RFP process, chose to negotiate hydro share sales with EPCOR.

The Unanimous Shareholders Agreement (USA) entered into by the town and Alectra in 2012 contained an exit provision, which required Collingwood to present a buy/sell option to Alectra for the sale of the town's shares.

In an agreement between Collingwood and EPCOR, when Alectra decided to sell its shares, EPCOR is set to become the sole owner of the utility.

An application will now be made to the Ontario Energy Board to approve the transaction. This process could take anywhere from three months up to one year. A Public Information Session will be held in the next few weeks to provide further details of the agreement, according to a press release from the town.

Representatives from EPCOR will make a presentation at that session.

Customers are assured that electricity distribution rates are set, and will continue to be set by the Ontario Energy Board (OEB).

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Thibeault ready for 'tough fight'

Sudbury Star - Mon Nov 20 2017
Byline: Keith Dempsey
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Glenn Thibeault isn't too concerned about a recent phone survey conducted for The Star by Oraclepoll that shows Sudburians are split almost evenly between the NDP, Liberals and Progressive Conservatives.

The NDP's Jamie West is out in front, but only by three percentage points. PC candidate Troy Crowder is at 31 per cent, according to the poll, while Liberal incumbent Thibeault is in third at 30 per cent.

"I've been in this now 10 years, and polls are always different," said Thibeault, the current MPP for Sudbury. "The one that is most important, obviously, is election day. I'll continue to work as hard as I can to earn people's trust, to make sure that when they go into the voting booth they're going to continue to choose me to be their representative."

The incumbent is not taking anything for granted, however.

"Is this going to be a tough fight? Of course it is," he said. "I'm not going into this with the blinders on. I recognize that every election is going to be a challenge."

Surrounded by local supporters at the Copper Cliff Curling Club on Sunday, Thibeault was nominated to run for re-election as the Ontario Liberal Party candidate in Sudbury.

Election day in Ontario is June 7, 2018.

When asked what his priorities are for the upcoming election, Thibeault didn't specify but said "there's lots of things that are left."

Asked if he was concerned the byelection scandal and lingering bitterness over high hydro rates might hurt him in the upcoming election, Thibeault said he's paying attention to all issues, while stressing the Liberals did take action to lower electricity bills.

"If you look at what we've done as a government, making sure that we rebuild the system, making sure the system is reliable and affordable, bringing forward the 25 per cent reduction, that's been helping a lot of families," Thibeault said. "That's one of the things we've been doing in the last little bit, knocking on doors, and I am hearing from many that the changes that we've made have been helping them, and that's important."

Thibeault, who previously represented Sudbury federally with the NDP, was elected to the Ontario legislature as a Liberal in the 2015 byelection.

He was appointed Ontario's energy minister in June, 2016.

The riding has gone NDP orange in the past, most recently with the election of Joe Cimino in 2014. The Green Party, which has yet to nominate a candidate, was preferred by just five per cent of Sudburians sampled by Oraclepoll.

Twenty per cent of those polled said they were undecided. Twitter: @keith_dempsey

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