Message

From: John Cannella [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CD667C6D53774DD0A749783BB02AE89D-JOHN CANNEL]
Sent: 2017-06-26 6:35:35 AM
Subject: Today's News - Monday, June 26, 2017

Today's News

powered by:

Date: Monday, June 26, 2017
Edited by: John Cannella (John.Cannella@ieso.ca)

Contact Editor

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Canadian Press - Fri Jun 23 2017
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ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - Costs for the Muskrat Falls hydro project in Labrador are up another $1 billion, a "boondoggle" the man in charge says is worse than the lopsided Upper Churchill debacle. Nalcor Energy CEO Stan Marshall said Friday the new price ...

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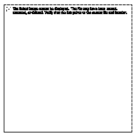

A cool innovation; Dynamic Earth hosts demonstration unit for deep mine refrigeration

Sudbury Star - Mon Jun 26 2017 **Page:** A2

After a seven-month-long build, the hydraulic air compressor demonstrator at Dynamic Earth has opened. The 100-foot-high, industrial-scale system for testing and demonstration of compressed air production is installed in a former elevator shaft.

The innovative technology is touted as an energy-efficient alternative to conventional mechanical air compression that promises up to 50 per cent savings in life cycle costs for mine operators and other industrial scale users of pneumatic power.

Hydraulic air compressors promise low-cost, low-carbon, energy-efficient compressed air for all industries requiring pneumatic power, but they are especially useful in the mining industry because the systems have great vertical extent.

The objective of the wider project is to lower the cost of energy for mine operators to help maintain the global competitiveness of the Ontario mining industry.

One intended new use for the compressed air produced by a HAC is for refrigeration of ventilation air for ultra deep mine cooling. Once the facility is opened, innovators from Mining Innovation Rehabilitation and Applied Research Corporation, scientists and engineers from Laurentian University and engineers from the industry partners will work collaboratively to prove the energy efficiency of the systems and to investigate their feasibility for mine cooling, gas liquefaction and carbon capture.

Electrale Innovation Ltd. is already exploring commercial opportunities for this energy efficient technology.

The HAC demonstrator project is a joint undertaking of the Ultra Deep Mining Network, a business-led network of Centres of Excellence, with MIRARCO Mining Innovation, Laurentian University, Electrale Innovation Ltd. and Reasbeck Construction.

The Ultra Deep Mining Network project was combined into two phases: research and construction, with a total value of $3.375 million. Significant financial contributions included $463,000 through the province's Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, $499,000 from the Independent Electricity System Operator's Conservation Fund, and $620,000 from Electrale Innovation Ltd and MIRARCO - Mining Innovation, with contributions from Victaulic Canada and KROHNE Canada.

Additional support was provided by Science North and Dynamic Earth, Vale

Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

"We are sincerely thankful to our funders and collaborators for investing in the development of the HAC project," said the project's lead investigator Dr. Dean Millar, professor in the Bharti School of Engineering at Laurentian University, director of energy renewables and carbon management at MIRARCO and president of Electrale Innovation Ltd.

"The historical and spiritual home of this technology is the mining industry of Ontario's North," Millar said in a release. "In its 21st century guise, we are confident that this Northern Ontario mining cleantech will achieve its energy-efficient air compression and mine-cooling objectives so that costs are lowered for mine operators. We are also excited by its potential for carbon capture for industry, right across the province."

The project will "show that hydraulic air compressors will be able to supply compressed air to provide a novel technique for mine air cooling in ultra-deep mines, and that it can do so safely, cheaply and reliably," said Douglas Morrison, UDMN network director and CEMI president and CEO. "This will increase the ability of mines to improve productivity in both development and production processes."

Glenn Thibeault, provincial ministry of energy and MPP for Sudbury, said the addition of the compressor to Dynamic Earth "allows us to demonstrate exactly what can be achieved when we bring the best of Northern Ontario together. By combining the experience of our mining industry with our leaders in the world of education and innovation, we have been able showcase our strengths to the world."

Thibeault said contributions from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation and Ontario Trillium Foundation have helped researchers to build a "demonstration of innovative, energy efficiency, clean technology."

For more information about HAC, visit www.electrale.com For a guided tour, email info@mirarco. org. sud.editorial@sunmedia.ca

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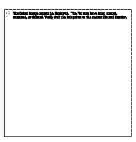

Plan for hydro rate relief

Owen Sound Sun Times - Sat Jun 24 2017
Byline: Glenn Thibeault
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When we introduced Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan in March, our government committed to fundamentally restructuring the system to deliver the biggest cut to electricity rates in Ontario's history.

I'm happy to say that the Fair Hydro Plan is now a reality. And I believe this is the fairer way forward.

This past week the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) announced it had taken the final steps to lower electricity prices by an average of 25 per cent for all residential consumers in the province. As many as half a million small businesses and farms will also benefit.

The OEB, the province's independent body that sets rates, lowered bills in response to the Fair Hydro Act, 2017, which passed in the Ontario legislature on May 31. All Progressive Conservative and NDP MPPs in attendance that day opposed our plan to bring down electricity rates and voted against the Fair Hydro Plan.

Relief through the Fair Hydro Plan is immediate. We also designed these reductions to last, by holding electricity rates to inflation for four years. In addition, we're updating our Long-term Energy Plan, which will continue our trend of taking costs out of the electricity system and making it more affordable for ratepayers.

Fifteen years ago, our electricity system had become unreliable, the victim of years of neglect by governments of all stripes, which culminated in the unforgettable blackout of 2003. We had to reinvest in our system, and that came at a cost to ratepayers. But the fact is electricity bills were becoming unaffordable for too many people. Premier Wynne and I spoke to people across the province about their electricity bills, hearing how they were struggling with rising payments.

In September, 2016 we announced an eight per cent rate reduction, equivalent to the provincial portion of the HST. But that wasn't enough. We heard that the most vulnerable among us needed even more support. That's why we expanded the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP), providing 50 per cent more support in the form of monthly credits for people with low incomes. Today, more households are eligible for the program than ever before.

People in rural and Northern communities also pay more for electricity, because it takes more infrastructure to deliver electricity to where they live. Today, the Rural or Remote Rate Protection program has been expanded to help about 800,000 households - cutting electricity bills by 40 to 50 per cent for eligible customers, effective July 1.

These changes to the way we pay for electricity are fairer, and they are lasting. We can afford them because of Ontario's strengthening economy, which is the fastest growing in Canada, and we need them to ensure the growth in our economy translates to more opportunity and security for people right across Ontario. There is no better way to use the province's recently balanced budget than by giving everyone the break they need on their hydro bills. It's the right thing to do for Ontario and the fair thing to do for your family.

Glenn Thibeault is the Minister of Energy for Ontario

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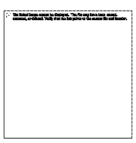

Two region sites still mulled to take nuclear fuel waste

London Free Press - Sat Jun 24 2017
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Two Bruce County municipalities remain in the running as potential sites to store Canada's used nuclear fuel.

Huron-Kinloss and South Bruce are still on the list in the nuclear Waste Management Organization's selection process for a deep geological repository, after it was announced that two other potential sites - the Municipality of Central Huron and the township of White river - had been removed.

"as we work toward identifying a single preferred site, we need to increasingly focus on specific locations that have strong potential to meet safety requirements and a foundation for sustained interest in exploring the project," Mahrez Belfadhel, vice-president of site selection, said in a news release.

"Central Huron and White river have each made a significant contribution on behalf of Canadians to this project, and their continued leadership will be invaluable as we work together to plan next steps in their region." this is a separate project from an Ontario Power Generation proposal for a deep geologic repository in Kincardine for low-and intermediate-level radioactive waste.

With the elimination of Central Huron from the fuel storage site list, Huron-Kinloss and South Bruce are the only remaining communities in southwestern Ontario. the other communities still being explored as potential sites include Hornpayne and Manitouwadge, Ignace, Blind river and elliott Lake, all located in northern Ontario. the nuclear Waste Management Organization announced it will plan for more geological studies for Huron-Kinloss, South Bruce and Hornepayne and Manitouwadge and more talks with local officials.

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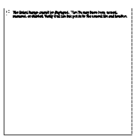

Weaker growth in electricity prices helps curb inflation; Data arrives just before Bank of Canada's scheduled interest rate announcement

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Canadian inflation eased up on the accelerator last month as weaker year-over-year growth in gasoline prices helped slow the annual rate to 1.3 per cent, Statistics Canada said Friday.

The May inflation rate was also lower than April's reading of 1.6 per cent because prices declined in electricity, bakery products and Internet access services, the agency said in its latest monthly report.

The data comes as the economy strengthens and the Bank of Canada prepares to make a scheduled interest rate announcement on July 12.

Last month's smaller inflation number could weigh on the central bank's decision, as the rate moved further away from its ideal target of 2 per cent.

The latest consumer price index also showed lower readings for two of the Bank of Canada's three preferred measures of core inflation, which the central bank will scrutinize ahead of its interest-rate decision.

Governor Stephen Poloz recently signalled he's moving closer to a hike in the benchmark interest rate. Many analysts now believe the bank will start moving the rate upwards from its historically low level of 0.5 per cent before the end of the year.

However, some economists have pointed to weak core inflation as a possible reason for the bank to hold off a little longer.

In its report Friday, Statistics Canada said year-over-year gas prices rose 6.8 per cent in May after climbing 15.9 per cent the previous month.

But despite the slower price growth, gasoline remained one of the biggest upward contributors to inflation last month, along with other costs associated with shelter and transportation.

Last month's 5.5 per cent decline in electricity was one of the biggest downward contributors and recent changes in Ontario's hydro rates appear to have had an impact on the national number.

Compared to a year earlier, Statistics Canada said the price of electricity in the country's most-populated province fell last month by 16.1 per cent.

Ontario had promised to cut electricity bills by an average of 17 per cent and the reductions were scheduled to start taking effect in May.

The Statistics Canada report also found weaker price growth in every province last month, with the biggest slowdown in Manitoba.

Food prices fell 0.1 per cent last month compared to a year earlier, shelter prices rose 1.9 per cent and transportation increased 2.2 per cent.

"Growth is coming in hot, but inflation is not," Nick Exarhos of CIBC Economics wrote in a note to clients.

Exarhos also said the modest slip in two of the central bank's preferred inflation readings cut "against recently more aggressive pricing for a rate hike as early as July."

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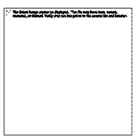

Citizens want to take back control of hydro

Norfolk News - Fri Jun 23 2017 **Page:** 1

The rates may be coming down, but Norfolk residents are still concerned about what is happening with hydro in Ontario.

These concerns were evident at a public meeting held on a warm Thursday evening earlier this month at the Port Rowan Community Centre.

A crowd of about 70 listened to a panel of four paint a dismal picture of hydro privatization and hardship for families and businesses in the county.

The event was sponsored by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). Panellist Jeremy Thibodeau, vice-president of OPSEU 230, noted that the crowd was much larger than the 25 to 30 people who have been turning out for meetings in bigger towns.

Perhaps the reason for the good turnout had to do with the fact that "Port Rowaners pay more than every jurisdiction in North American except Hawaii," Haldimand-Norfolk MPP Toby Barrett noted.

Barrett is receiving an increasing number of complaints on hydro issues. One Turkey Point couple living on a fixed income, for example, is paying 60 per cent of their monthly income on electricity, he reported.

Although hydro is outside of his jurisdiction, Norfolk County Ward 1 Coun. Noel Haydt also regularly gets phone calls.

"People on fixed incomes are struggling and have to make a choice between whether they are going to eat or keep the lights on," Haydt told the crowd.

Former New Democratic Party MPP Rosario Marchese of Toronto put forward a spirited overview of the history of public power in Ontario.

Using a graph, Marchese illustrated how rates had remained steady for 94 years.

Prior to 1905, Ontario had private electricity, which was only affordable to the very wealthy. Conservative politician Adam Beck succeeded in a campaign to bring down the cost. Beck established the principle of "hydro at cost" by eliminating the profit and the profiteers. The result was that people and businesses thrived.

Then in 1999, Premier Mike Harris deregulated hydro, breaking it up into five bureaucracies. Harris "gave away" the Bruce nuclear station to a British firm that now turns a profit of $650 million per annum - an event Marchese cited as a turning point for Ontario.

"Mike did that. No one else did that," Marchese said.

Port Rowan resident Gordon Wilson chaired the meeting. Wilson summed up the general feeling of the audience this way: "We are not happy. There are things we can do. We want hydro back in people's hands, not government sticking it to us as we've seen for the last few years."

Barrett said that the provincial Liberals' Green Energy Act "had opened the door to high rates" and argued that it should be dismantled.

The signing of unnecessary electricity contracts must cease and authority for locating of wind turbines should be transferred to municipal government, said the MPP.

Marchese wants to buy back hydro from the "profiteers" who now control it. Challenged by audience members as to whether this can be done, Marchese said government could do it, if it is motivated.

Thibodeau spoke of OPSEU's We Own It campaign. The campaign is a grassroots movement of Ontarians who want to keep public services public. Rolled out just ten months ago, it continues building momentum and already has 35,000 supporters.

We Own It assists in starting local chapters and organizing events like picnics and other activities.

Thibodeau says many local councils have passed motions calling for moratoriums on the outsourcing public services without prior rigorous review of the proposals. That's a direction Norfolk council could take, he said.

The meeting also touched on other potential privatizations such as a pending move to sell long-term care facilities in Grey County and frequent speculation about selling LCBO assets.

No Liberal MPPs were asked to be part of the Port Rowan panel. Thibodeau said they have been invited to similar events but have not attended.

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Price tag for Muskrat Falls hydro megaproject rises by another billion, CEO says; Muskrat Falls price tag up by another billion

Canadian Press - Fri Jun 23 2017
Byline: Sue Bailey

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - Costs for the Muskrat Falls hydro project in Labrador are up another $1 billion, a "boondoggle" the man in charge says is worse than the lopsided Upper Churchill debacle.

Nalcor Energy CEO Stan Marshall said Friday the new price tag is $12.7 billion with financing. That's up from an estimate last year of $11.7 billion and is about $5 billion higher than when the former Progressive Conservative government approved Muskrat Falls five years ago.

Marshall took over as head of the Crown corporation last year after the governing Liberals criticized oversight. He said at the time the megaproject was a colossal mistake that he'd try to fix.

"I knew this was a boondoggle," that should never have gone ahead, Marshall reiterated Friday.

"As long as I'm here I'll do my best," he added, vowing it can still "finish strong."

"The only way to have solved this was not to have built it in the first place ... It was too late to stop. We couldn't get a refund."

Initial cost projections were drastically low-balled, he said: Either intentionally or unintentionally, "the costs were significantly underestimated."

Marshall blamed the latest budget bloat on contractor disputes, higher operating costs, a leaky cofferdam and delays, including a worksite occupation last fall by demonstrators concerned about methylmercury.

Marshall said 75 per cent of construction is now done, up from 48 per cent last May.

First power is expected in 2019 at an estimated cost of 23.3 cents per kilowatt hour before tax.

That's up 8.2 cents from when Muskrat Falls was approved and would double recent rates paid by consumers.

Marshall and Premier Dwight Ball have said they'll look at ways to reduce that hit and cut average monthly bills that could otherwise go up more than $150 per month.

The previous Tory government sanctioned Muskrat Falls in 2012, a joint venture with Nova Scotia utility Emera championed by former premier Danny Williams. It will bring power from Labrador to the island of Newfoundland then on to Nova Scotia using subsea cables and a vast overland transmission network.

Williams hailed Muskrat Falls as the answer to his province's long-running feud with Hydro-Quebec over transmission access and the Upper Churchill deal. Terms of the 65-year contract did not reflect rising energy rates.

As a result, the Upper Churchill dam and powerhouse in Labrador have so far delivered about $27.5 billion for Hydro-Quebec versus $2 billion for Newfoundland and Labrador. The dispute is once again before the Supreme Court of Canada for a hearing on whether the contract should be reopened.

Marshall said Friday that Muskrat Falls is especially painful because it made the opposite gaffe as supporters gambled that energy values would stay high. They lost, and this time ratepayers on the hook, he said.

Costs could rise again, Marshall added.

"Muskrat Falls has had its surprises. I'm not going to say that there won't be any more."

He said Nalcor is working with Labrador aboriginal leaders on methylmercury concerns downstream as land is flooded.

"I'm not looking to do anything that will endanger people."

Ball said Friday that Muskrat Falls was "ill-conceived and reckless," but stopped short of calling for a forensic audit.

Such a review now would eat up more cash and could add to delays, he said. Ball said he's committed to a more in-depth look later on.

He blamed the staggering increases on "neglect" and questioned why Nalcor and the previous Tory government did not act years ago to rein in costs.

On Friday, Ball released a 2013 risk management report by SNC-Lavalin that warned of the fiscal fallout.

Stamped "confidential" and "for internal use only," it forecast cost overruns of 39 per cent with a potential extra price tag of $2.4 billion when Muskrat Falls was just 20 per cent complete.

Ball said he only received the report Thursday from Nalcor.

Still, Ball continued this week to talk up future Labrador hydro projects. But he stressed that consultation with aboriginal leaders would have to improve and any new developments can't be "on the backs of ratepayers."

Former premier Paul Davis, who became official Opposition leader when the Liberals won in 2015, said Friday the Tory government pushed for Muskrat Falls based on information it had at the time. He said he wasn't aware of the risk management report while in power.

He also challenged Ball to order a forensic audit now if the premier questions those initial estimates.

"We have nothing to hide from the decisions that we made."

Follow @suebailey on Twitter.

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