Infomart Newsletters

From: Infomart Newsletters
Sent: January 4, 2018 7:51 AM
To: Rosemarie Leclair
Subject: Morning News Clippings - Thursday, January 4, 2018

View in Browser

Morning News Clippings

powered by: infomart

Date: Thursday, January 4, 2018
Edited by: Tara Brautigam (Tara.Brautigam@oeb.ca)

Contact Editor

Clippings Summary

News - 8 Results

Provincial regulator sets OPG's nuclear budget

World Nuclear News - Wed Jan 3 2018
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has published its decision on Ontario Power Generation's (OPG's) application regarding payments for regulated nuclear and hydropower output in 2017-2021.

Canadian Board Trims OPG Budget Request

Nuclear Street News - Wed Jan 3 2018
Tone: Neutral
Permalink

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) must cut $500 million from its $16.8 billion budget request for nuclear operations submitted to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) in May 2016, the utility regulator said Friday.

THE EXPOSITOR

Electricity rates increase

Brantford Expositor - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Positive
Byline: Vincent Ball

Ad Value: $489
Reach: 29497 **Page:** A1 / Front

Customers of Brantford Power will be paying more for electricity this year. An increase in the electricity distribution rates and other charges for all Brantford ...

Utilities scramble to collect cold cash amid deep freeze

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Jennifer Bieman

Ad Value: $434
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A2

Unpaid bills mounting. A new law preventing delinquent customers from being cut off until the ground thaws. A weeks-long deep freeze that's plunged Southwestern Ontario into dangerously cold lows. A perfect storm is bearing down on ...

NGH invests in energy efficiency

Delhi News-Record - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Monte Sonnenberg

Ad Value: $172
Reach: 662 **Page:** A1 / Front

Norfolk General Hospital is about to make a major investment in patient care and comfort. NGH recently learned that it has qualified for a $1.8-million grant under the province's Hospital Energy Efficiency Program (HEEP). The purpose of ...

Rinaldi confident he and his party will be re-elected next summer

Brighton Independent - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: John Campbell
Page: A3

Despite polls showing the Liberals trailing the Progressive Conservatives and controversies that have dogged his government, MPP Lou Rinaldi is confident he and his party will win the provincial election next June. "I can bring experience and some ...

All pain and no gain: Alberta's unpopular carbon tax rises by 50% this week, fires up opposition

Financial Post - Wed Jan 3 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Claudia Cattaneo
Reach: 607500

In a perverse kind of way, this week's 50 per cent increase in Alberta's unpopular carbon tax - to $30 per tonne of carbon dioxide emissions - could be a big gift from Rachel Notley's NDP government to her opponent, United Conservative Party (UCP) ...

PM's carbon scheme already a $16B failure

Toronto Sun - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Lorriegoldstein

Ad Value: $2,636

Reach: 171076 **Page:** A15

Ottawa and the provinces will rake in more than $16 billion from carbon pricing between 2018 and 2020, while failing to achieve the Trudeau government's 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target. My $16 billion estimate - the bulk ...

Clippings Summary

Full Articles

Provincial regulator sets OPG's nuclear budget

World Nuclear News · Wed Jan 3 2018
Tone: Neutral

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has published its decision on Ontario Power Generation's (OPG's) application regarding payments for regulated nuclear and hydropower output in 2017-2021.

Back to Top

Canadian Board Trims OPG Budget Request

Nuclear Street News · Wed Jan 3 2018
Tone: Neutral

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) must cut $500 million from its $16.8 billion budget request for nuclear operations submitted to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) in May 2016, the utility regulator said Friday.

Back to Top

Electricity rates increase

THE EXPOSITOR

Brantford Expositor · Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Positive
Byline: Vincent Ball

Ad Value: $489
Reach: 29497 **Page:** A1 / Front

Customers of Brantford Power will be paying more for electricity this year.

An increase in the electricity distribution rates and other charges for all Brantford Power customers has been approved by the Ontario Energy Board. The increase came into effect Jan. 1.

For the typical residential Brantford Power customers who consume 750 kilowatt hours (kWH) of electricity per month the increase means their bill will go up 1.5 per cent or $1.60 a month. At present, the typical residential consumer pays about $105.52 a month for electricity.

The $105.52 figure applies to the typical residential customer who doesn't purchase electricity from a retailer and who follows the Ontario Energy Board's prescribed time-ofuse consumption pattern. The prescribed pattern recommends using 65 per cent of the energy consumed during off-peak hours, 17 per cent during mid-peak hours and 18 per cent during the peak hours.

Other factors that can impact a monthly electricity bill includes support received from provincial and local social assistance programs and purchasing

electricity from a **retailer**.

"This **rate** adjustment has been approved by the **Ontario Energy Board** to allow us to recover the ongoing costs of providing safe, high-quality and reliable services to the community of **Brantford**, and to renew assets and modernize our system for the future," Paul Kwasnik president and CEO of **Brantford Power** Inc. said in a news release.

For general **service** customers such as small businesses that have a peak demand of less than 50 kilowats (kW) and that consume less than 2,000 kWh will see their monthly bill rise by 47 cents a month or 0.2 per cent.

Brantford Power delivers **electricity** to about 40,000 customers.

The adjusted **rates** cover the costs of designing, building and maintaining overhead and underground lines, poles, stations and local transformers. The **rates** also cover requests for day-to-day services and responding to emergencies such as **power** outages and are part of the "delivery" line of a **customer**'s bills.

Brantford Power's **distribution rates** account for about 22 per cent of a typical residential **customer**'s bill.

Electricity rates in **Ontario** are regulated by the **energy** board on behalf of consumers.

Brantford Power undergoes a **cost of service review** which is a **public review** of its projected costs every five years. In between those years, applications are submitted annually for **rate** adjustments to allow **Brantford Power** to keep up with inflation.

All **rate** changes must be reviewed by the **energy** board and are only approved if deemed by the **regulator** to be reasonable and **fair**.

To learn more about the impact of the change on the monthly bill visit www.ontarioenergyboard.ca. Vball@postmedia.com twitter.com/EXPVBall

Back to Top

Utilities scramble to collect cold cash amid deep freeze

The Beacon Herald

Stratford Beacon-Herald - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Jennifer Bieman

Ad Value: $434
Reach: 10143 **Page:** A2

Unpaid bills mounting. A new law preventing delinquent customers from being cut off until the ground thaws.

A weeks-long deep freeze that's plunged Southwestern **Ontario** into dangerously cold lows.

A perfect storm is bearing down on **regional power** and heating **utilities**, scrambling to collect overdue accounts from winter-battered **ratepayers** as the region braces for more snow and numbing cold.

The number of **London Hydro** accounts in arrears has skyrocketed to nearly 4,400 from about 2,000 as of Nov. 20.

Chatham-based **Union Gas**, the region's major **natural gas** distributor, has been busy fielding a flurry of calls from customers struggling to pay up, too.

In sharp contrast to a year ago, when the region emerged from the warmest December on record in Ontario, the brutal reality of subzero cold is hitting the pocketbook earlier for many who can't afford the deep freeze.

And cold temperatures are expected to last into the weekend.

"It puts a lot of stress on us," Nancy Hutton, a spokesperson for London Hydro, said Wednesday.

"Bad debts affect all customers eventually, and we have to make sure those arrears are eventually collected so that we can keep rates down for all Londoners."

Out of London Hydro's approximately 150,000 monthly payments from customers, 1,200 are due now, 2,000 are a month past due and 1,100 are three months past their deadline, said Ward 1 Coun. Michael Van Holst, who sits on the utility's board.

There are several reasons for the spike in unpaid bills, Hutton said, but the real game-changer came from Queen's Park.

Ontario's law banning wintertime utility disconnections sped through the legislature late last February, making this the first full winter the law is on the books.

The Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act prevents utilities from cutting off service for nonpayment between November and March.

Couple that with the unseasonable cold snap and lake-effect snow squalls this week, and it's a recipe for higher-than-normal electricity usage.

Hutton said the temporary disconnection ban may have reduced some people's incentive to pay up on time.

Though London Hydro has used disconnections as a last resort for years, customers facing steep bills may feel safer deferring payment knowing their electricity can't be cut off by law.

"The number of accounts in arrears has increased dramatically. It is very unfortunate," said Hutton.

"Knowing that we can't disconnect, some people don't bother to keep in touch with us."

But interest accumulates on unpaid bills, and months of outstanding balances add up quickly, leading to even bigger problems in the spring, Hutton said.

London Hydro is trying to reach delinquent account holders, connect low-income households struggling to make payments with utility-support programs and get people on repayment plans before bills become unmanageable.

"We try to work with the customers," said Hutton, adding collectors who once handed out disconnection warnings now deliver calling cards.

"We send them reminders and we have our collectors leave information about how they can reach out to us to make payment arrangements so they won't get into a situation in the springtime."

For people unable to pay their power or natural gas bills, help is available year-round, said Union Gas spokesperson Andrea Stass.

A provincewide program, administered locally by the Salvation Army, can provide as much as $500 for electricity and $500 for natural gas bills - or about six months worth of gas payments to eligible families, said Stass.

Both **Union Gas** and **London Hydro** participate in the program. In 2017, about $200,000 in **Union Gas** money was allocated to 433 lowincome households in the **London** and Sarnia-Lambton area, Stass said.

Back to Top

NGH invests in energy efficiency

Delhi News-Record - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Monte Sonnenberg

Ad Value: $172
Reach: 662 **Page:** A1 / Front

Norfolk General Hospital is about to make a major investment in patient care and comfort.

NGH recently learned that it has qualified for a $1.8-million grant under the province's Hospital **Energy** Efficiency Program (HEEP).

The purpose of HEEP is to reduce the **carbon footprint** of **Ontario** hospitals, which tend to use a lot of **energy** all year round.

The government established HEEP as part of **Climate** Change Action **Plan**. The centrepiece of the action **plan** is a **cap-and-trade** carbon tax.

"Hospitals are huge consumers of **energy**, mostly because of the vital patient-care related equipment," Kellen Mowat, NGH's director of capital planning, said in a news release.

"The government's intention is to reduce the province's **carbon footprint**. For NGH, it's also about the comfort of our patients and staff, particularly with the replacement of air-handling units."

The replacement of air-handling units is by far the largest of the three **energy**-efficiency projects planned at NGH. This aspect of the upgrade will cost $1.44 million.

Condensing economizers and blow-down heat recovery improvements will cost $270,000.

Also planned is steam piping and trap replacement in the amount of $100,000.

"We appreciate receiving this funding since it allows us to upgrade building infrastructure and generate savings that can be put towards patient care," Tom Thomson, NGH vice-president of finance, said in a news release.

The HEEP upgrades are not related to plans for a $13-million upgrade to the hospital's day-surgery area, main operating theatres and maternity ward.

To date, NGH has raised $9 million toward its Building a Better Hospital Fund.

Gerry Hamill, spokesperson for NGH, said the hospital is on target to raise the remaining $4 million in 2018. Once the target is reached, improvements to the hospital can begin in earnest. MSonnenberg@postmedia.com

Back to Top

Rinaldi confident he and his party will be re-elected next summer

Brighton Independent · Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: John Campbell
Page: A3

Despite polls showing the Liberals trailing the Progressive Conservatives and controversies that have dogged his government, MPP Lou Rinaldi is confident he and his party will win the provincial election next June.

"I can bring experience and some proven facts (as to) what I was able to do in the riding over the last 10, 11 years," he said.

But he will also be touting "the huge advances" his government has made in the areas of education, health care and labour.

Should he win he will represent the new riding of Northumberland-Peterborough South to mirror the federal riding.

Rinaldi isn't fazed by Premier Kathleen Wynne's poor standing in the polls and the controversies that have buffeted the party.

"Every election there's been some issue," he said. "The only poll that counts is the one on election day, and I'm confident that when people really take a close look of all three parties" and their leaders they "will make the right decision."

Ontario auditor general Bonnie Lysyk once again took aim at missteps by the province in its management of taxpayer dollars with her annual report in December and the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario raised questions of its own with its economic and fiscal outlook update less than a week later.

The latter projected a deficit of $4 billion for 2017-18 and warned it would grow to $9.8 billion by 2022, largely as a result of the Fair Hydro Plan that the Liberals introduced which cut the average household electricity bill by 25 per cent.

Lysyk also criticized the plan in a special report she released in October that assailed the financing scheme the government had adopted to take on $26 billion in borrowing costs but "keep deficits and an increase in net debt from showing up on the province's books."

Rinaldi said his government has "experts in the financial sector" who support its plan along with its assertion that "we will have a balanced budget this year … (and) for the foreseeable future."

"We're using the same accounting practices that have been used in the Province of Ontario for over 16 years and a lot of other jurisdictions use exactly the same accounting practices," he said. "We also have projections from a number of economists that we're on the right track. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in all of Canada."

Among the failings identified in the auditor general's annual report was long wait times for key biopsies in the diagnosis of cancer.

"Absolutely we need to do better," Rinaldi acknowledged, but he also cited a recent report issued by the Fraser Institute that said Ontario has "the shortest wait time in the majority of health-care procedures."

The need for more social housing was raised by the auditor general who noted there are 185,000 households on the provincial wait list.

Rinaldi responded that the province made "some historic investments" in social housing after the federal government under the Conservatives "pulled back" in providing funding.

Social housing will improve now that "the new federal government is going to partner again," he said.

"The reality is we are a very progressive government," he continued.

"We are always in the search to deliver services better and more economically."

2017 "was a very busy year," with an "awful lot of legislation" being passed to help families, such as the increase in minimum wage to $14 an hour as of Jan. 1, 2018.

Also taking effect the same day was OHIP Plus, the expansion of the **Ontario** Health Insurance **Plan** to include free drug care to anyone under 25 years of age.

In addition, more than 200,000 post-secondary **students** received free tuition last September.

His government also worked with the hospitals in his riding "to make sure that they have adequate funding" and it announced in October that money would be provided for 1,200 new in-patient hospital beds across the province.

Quinte Health Care and Northumberland **Hills** Hospital were among the recipients "to deal with their higher volumes," Rinaldi said.

Back to Top

All pain and no gain: Alberta's unpopular carbon tax rises by 50% this week, fires up opposition

Financial Post - Wed Jan 3 2018
Tone: Negative
Byline: Claudia Cattaneo
Reach: 607500

In a perverse kind of way, this week's 50 per cent increase in Alberta's unpopular carbon tax - to $30 per tonne of carbon dioxide emissions - could be a big gift from Rachel Notley's NDP government to her opponent, United Conservative Party (UCP) opposition leader Jason Kenney.

The increase means the province now ties British Columbia for having the highest carbon tax in the country.

But in Alberta it stings as the province uses more **energy** for heating and **transportation**.

The cost in a typical Alberta household of a $30 a tonne tax is $667 a year, compared to $362 in the typical B.C. household, according to a study by Jennifer Winter, an **energy** economist at the University of Calgary's school of **public** policy. At $50 a tonne, the annual cost is $1,111 in Alberta and $603 in B.C.

It's no small change in a lousy provincial economy with high unemployment. Polls consistently show strong disapproval of the tax, which piles on top of higher taxes and increased environmental regulations that are depressing job creation in the oil and **gas** sector.

Energy Canada still on pace to fall short of Paris target, despite ambitious **climate** policies: UN filings (business.financialpost.com)

Ontario's carbon pricing future uncertain between **cap and trade** and carbon tax (business.financialpost.com)

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley.

Alberta's hefty carbon tax is one of the big pieces of the province's **climate** leadership **plan**, pushed through by Notley's government when Alberta's conservatives were in disarray and political implications seemed remote.

The question is whether Albertans embrace the tough medicine and its benefits, as claimed by the government, or will slam the door on the tax grab when they return to the polls next year. That's what the UCP, which reunited conservatives last year and picked Kenney to lead them, is counting on. Meanwhile, the dueling views are clashing hard.

University of Calgary economics professor Trevor Tombe said the carbon tax is controversial because it's visible in heating bills and at the pumps and because of its negative economic impact. Even government estimates show it shrinks GDP and deters employment, he said.

Under the **plan**, the tax increases to $50 a tonne by 2022 to line up with federal goals. But other provinces are taking longer to ramp up.

Carbon is priced at $19 a tonne in the **cap and trade** market in Quebec and **Ontario**. Provinces without carbon pricing are subject to the federal carbon price, which starts at $10 per tonne in 2018 and rises by $10 per year to $50 per tonne in 2022.

The Alberta NDP says the benefits of its carbon tax include economic diversification away from oil and **gas**, job creation from greener jobs, emissions reductions, tax rebates for those with lower incomes.

So far, green job creation hasn't offset the estimated 100,000 oil and **gas** jobs lost over the last three years, partly due to Alberta's **climate** change **plan**.

Cheryl Oates, communications director for Notley, said 2,000 jobs have been created from **energy** efficiency programs so far and another 1,300 jobs are expected. The recently announced winning bidders of renewable **electricity** projects are expected to create another 740 jobs, with 7,000 jobs overall expected in new **renewable energy** by 2030.

The province estimates it will collect $1.038 billion in revenue from the tax in fiscal 2017-2018, rising to $1.396 billion in 2018-2019.

"All revenue from carbon pricing is reinvested back into Alberta's economy to reduce emissions, support **renewable energy** and help Alberta families and businesses adjust to the price of carbon," said Oates.

The government also argues that even with the increase in carbon pricing, Alberta has an overall tax advantage compared to other provinces because it has no provincial sales tax, health premium or payroll tax. It estimates Albertans and Alberta businesses will still pay at least $8.7 billion less in total taxes and carbon charges than if the province had the same tax system and carbon pricing as other provinces.

Kenney says he would immediately repeal the "job killing tax" if elected premier - and at the same time put a big dent in the federal government's own **climate** change **plan**, which relies on Alberta toeing the line.

United Conservative Party Leader Jason Kenney.

"Alberta families and job-creators have suffered enough under this NDP government, and now they have to endure a 50 per cent increase in a carbon tax that hasn't converted a single opponent of Alberta's **energy** industry into a supporter," Kenney said in a statement.

"The carbon tax was supposed to buy 'social license' for pipelines to get built. Instead, since the NDP announced its **plan**, Justin Trudeau vetoed approved

Northern Gateway, Barack Obama vetoed Keystone XL, the National Energy Board effectively killed Energy East, and the NDP government in B.C. is doing everything it can to block TransMountain. Not one single government, party, or special interest group has gone from 'no' to 'yes' on pipelines as a result of the NDP's failed tax on everything."

If the trend continues, and the two remaining pipeline projects aren't built, Notley would hand her political opponents another big gift by showing the tax is all pain and no gain. At this time, the odds are hard to call because the future of both Keystone XL and the Trans Mountain expansion depend on the resolution of legal disputes with opponents.

Financial Post

ccattaneo@nationalpost.com(mailto:ccattaneo@nationalpost.com)

Back to Top

PM's carbon scheme already a $16B failure

Toronto Sun - Thu Jan 4 2018
Tone: Neutral
Byline: Lorriegoldstein

Ad Value: $2,636
Reach: 171076 **Page:** A15

Ottawa and the provinces will rake in more than $16 billion from carbon pricing between 2018 and 2020, while failing to achieve the Trudeau government's 2020 greenhouse gas reduction target.

My $16 billion estimate - the bulk of which will be paid by Canadians in higher taxes and prices for most goods and services - is a conservative one.

It doesn't factor in the full financial impact of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's mandatory minimum national carbon price of $10 per tonne of emissions, which kicked in Jan. 1, rising to $50 per tonne in 2022.

Meanwhile, the Trudeau government has already conceded in its recent report to the United Nations under the Paris climate accord, that Canada won't achieve Trudeau's target of reducing emissions to 17% below 2005 levels by 2020.

That would require Ottawa to reduce Canada's current emissions of 722 megatonnes annually (based on 2015 figures, the latest available) to 613 megatonnes by 2020, or by 109 megatonnes.

Reducing Canada's emissions by 109 megatonnes annually (a megatonne equals one million tonnes) by 2020, would mean the equivalent of shutting down Canada's entire electricity sector (79 megatonnes of annual emissions) plus 41% of the agriculture sector (73 megatonnes of annual emissions), in three years.

Simply put, that's impossible.

In 2018 alone, Ottawa and the provinces will rake in at least $5.4 billion in revenue from carbon taxes and cap and trade, a carbon tax by another name.

This figure is based on revenue estimates from the four provinces - Ontario, Alberta, B.C. and Quebec - that have already imposed carbon pricing, a federal estimate of revenues from carbon pricing in the six provinces that haven't yet set a carbon price but must do so this year, plus Ottawa's share of carbon pricing revenues from the GST.

Ontario will take in about $1.8 billion from carbon pricing in 2018, Alberta $1.04

billion, B.C. $1.19 billion and Quebec $545 million.

According to Parliamentary Budget Officer Jean-Denis Frechette, **Ottawa** will take in between $236 million and $267 million in carbon pricing revenues during the 2017-18 fiscal year in the four provinces that have already imposed it, because of the GST, and between $265 million and $313 million in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Finally, according to a secret federal finance department memo obtained by Blacklock's Reporter, "**energy** consumers in provinces without a legislated carbon tax will pay at least $600 million in higher fuel costs" in 2018, with the imposition of Trudeau's mandatory minimum carbon price of $10 per tonne, rising substantially in future years as the mandatory minimum price increases.

Most of the estimated $5.4 billion cost of carbon pricing in 2018, and the $16 billion cumulative cost from 2018 to 2020, will be paid by Canadians in higher taxes and prices for most goods and services, although B.C. has historically lowered other taxes to offset revenues from its carbon tax and Alberta's carbon tax is partially offset by tax reductions for small business and full rebates to about 60% of provincial households.

The ultimate cost faced by Canadians in the six provinces that haven't yet set a carbon price will depend on the outcome of negotiations with **Ottawa**.

But the bottom line is Canadians are now paying billions of dollars annually for government carbon pricing schemes that will not achieve Trudeau's emission reduction targets for 2020, or for that matter, 2030. lgoldstein@postmedia.com @sunlorrie

Back to Top