

Smitherman talks DG in Markham

Markham Ontario: The Hon. George Smitherman, Ontario's Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, visited the local district heating plant in Markham on April 20 where the topic of the day was energy efficiency at the local level.

Asked about the initiatives in Markham, Minister Smitherman said, "What's impressive is that the Town of Markham had a vision. It took a lot of courage to decide to make the investments even before all of the users were here. At the heart of it, this notion of combined heat and power is really about efficiency. It's about how you can have one plant that can produce enough electricity and heat for 5000 homes and 3 million square feet of office space without each of those buildings having their own boilers or their own furnaces. Two things really: The leadership on the part of the Town of Markham and the model of combined heat and power is intensely efficient. It's very, very exciting for that reason."

In a presentation by Bruce Ander, Chair of the Canadian District Energy Association and President of Markham District Energy Inc., current concerns of



The Hon. George Smitherman, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, and Frank Scarpitti, Mayor of Markham, at the controls of Markham District Energy, on April 20.

the distributed generation industry were put before the Minister. Ander laid out the following specific recommendations:

1. Legislate community energy planning so there are "no missed opportunities."
2. Finance the installation of thermal energy infrastructure whenever possible in new high density urban developments.
3. Continue to aggressively advance the development of combined heat & power projects in parallel with the new renewable energy supply.
4. Immediately instruct the Ontario

Power Authority to release the Clean Energy Standard Offer Program.

In his presentation, Mr. Ander noted how other countries have combined renewable energy programs with programs encouraging combined heat and power. Denmark, for example, uses a Feed-In Tariff much like Ontario's, but complements it with a relatively strong incentive for the development and operation of combined heat and power (CHP). In many cases such initiatives are greatly facilitated by coordinated local energy planning, a practice that can help to increase overall energy efficiency but which is unfortunately relatively rare in Canada.

The Town of Markham's energy programs are in the forefront among Canadian municipalities, having initiated major conservation initiatives and spun off a district energy corporation. (See "Markham enters the competitive energy market," in IPPSO FACTO, February 2008.)

For more photos of Minister Smitherman's visit to Markham, please see www.lakephotography.ca/galleries/markham%20hydro%20april%202009/.

Six community power projects approved

Toronto: The Community Power Fund announced the approval of six new grants March 17 to communities across Ontario. The projects represent a diverse group of initiatives including: a First Nations small-hydro project in the northwestern Ontario, a solar/wind project at a mosque in Maple, a co-operatively owned wind farm west of Kitchener, a solar/geothermal project at the Buckhorn Community Center, a Toronto housing co-operative solar thermal initiative, and a First Nations biomass cogeneration plant near North Bay.

"It is wonderful to see these projects moving forward given all of the barriers communities face when they pursue a renewable energy project in Ontario," said Meghan MacLennan, the Com-

munity Power Fund's Program Manager. "The projects represent a cross section of Ontario and reflect how community power can be harnessed by all Ontarians."

The approval of these six applications represents a much-needed investment of over \$179,000 in sustainable community development. "This grant will enable us to determine the best course of action that is both feasible and environmentally responsible," said Director of the Buckhorn Community Centre, Sean Flanagan. "Without the CPFund grant, we would not have been able to explore the feasibility of doing a renewable energy project in our community."

"While these projects are a good model for other community efforts, they are just the tip of the iceberg. Ontario

needs legislation that will help remove barriers and level the playing field for community power," said Deb Doncaster, Executive Director of the Community Power Fund. "The Green Energy Act will be the seminal piece of legislation providing support for Community Power in Ontario."

The Community Power Fund was founded in 2007 by the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) with \$3 million in seed money from the Government of Ontario. The Community Power Fund's goal is to ensure communities wanting to develop and own local renewable energy projects have access to financial resources through all stages of project development.