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Five Ontario electric utilities to partner on solar initiative

Pilot project will measure conservation impact of using solar powered attic vents

COLLINGWOOD, ON - Five Ontario electricity distribution companies are getting together to partner on an initiative that will test the effectiveness of using solar powered attic vents in helping to reduce the electricity consumption required to cool homes.

The announcement was made today at a project launch event on Davis Street in Collingwood where representatives from Collus Power, PowerStream, Orangeville Hydro, St Thomas Energy, Wasaga Beach Distribution, other key stakeholders, members of the media as well as County Warden and Mayor of Wasaga Beach, Cal Patterson, witnessed the unveiling, on the roof of a new home, two fully-installed solar powered attic vent units that were provided by the project's supplier, International Solar Solutions.

A solar powered attic vent, also referred to as a solar powered roof vent, works during the day and has a solar panel which converts energy from the sun into electricity. This electricity operates a motor that drives a fan inside the vent. Attic ventilation is an important aspect in maintaining a healthy energy-efficient home. Venting cools a roof, extends the life of roof materials and helps to reduce the load on air conditioning systems.

Collus Power, PowerStream and Orangeville Hydro will operate the pilot in their respective service territories using a combination of installing solar powered attic vents on new houses being built by Devonleigh Homes and retrofitting houses in older subdivisions. Wasaga Beach Distribution and St. Thomas Energy will be installing the vents on both new and retrofit homes within their service area.

All of the participating utilities, with the exception of PowerStream, will operate the pilot throughout their service territories. PowerStream will only be installing solar power attic vents in the community of Alliston.

"We are excited about measuring the impact that this technology will have in helping homeowners to reduce their electricity consumption, especially during the summer months," said Ed Houghton, President and CEO of Collus Power. "If the data confirms what we already suspect, we look forward to helping to roll this out as a solar and conservation initiative to other areas in the province."

Brian Bentz, President and CEO of PowerStream, agreed with Houghton, adding that the project is consistent with his utility's efforts to demonstrate leadership within electricity industry.

"We are grateful to Mr. Houghton and the Town of Collingwood for bringing this opportunity to us," Bentz said. "We expect this partnership to be of benefit to all the participating utilities."

Students from Georgian College will participate with their peers from London's Fanshawe College and Toronto's Centennial College in providing research and measurement testing support for the project.

Homeowners in Collingwood, Alliston and Wasaga Beach seeking additional information or interested in registering for the solar powered attic vent retrofit installation program can call 1-866-337-8089.