

Oct. 19, 2011 - Grand opening of the Lily Lake Solar Farm



Our RBI Team out at the Lily Lake Solar Site

The Lily Lake Solar Farm started full operations in June but hosted dignitaries and key speakers Wednesday as part of its official opening.

The solar power generating facility, which generates enough electricity to serve 1,500 homes, is the largest municipally owned and developed solar facility in Ontario, said Peterborough Utilities CEO John Stephenson.

Its few months in operation have been "very successful," he told the crowd of 85 people at the site just northwest of the city on Lily Lake Rd., at the corner of Ackison Rd., in Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield Township. The 300-acre facility generates enough electricity for a village the size of Lakefield, offsets greenhouse gas emissions by 2,200 tonnes per year, and provides economic returns to the City of Peterborough, he said.

They saw the same dream we saw", Peterborough Utilities Group chairman Stephen Kylie.

Peterborough Utilities has a 20-year contract with Ontario Power Authority to supply solar power at a fixed rate of 42 cents per kWh, which generates about \$5.5 million in annual gross revenue for the utility.

The \$45-million construction cost is estimated to be paid off in nine years.

The facility connects with Hydro One's local distribution system just south of Lily Lake Rd. and began supplying power to the grid in April.

Reeve Mary Smith said it was an "exciting day" and she recalled her township's citizens asking council to be leaders in sustainability and innovation.

"We believe these projects fulfil that wish," she said. The township is exploring solar generation at the former landfill site in Ennismore, she said.

Peterborough Utilities Group chairman Stephen Kylie thanked Mayor Daryl Bennett and his council as well as former mayor Paul Ayotte and his council for persevering with the project.

"They saw the same dream we saw," Kylie said. Bennett said the solar farm is a turning point for energy policy in this community. It has produced local employment and revenue for the city. Bennett turned to Infrastructure Ontario representative Steve Rohacek and added, "We're not done yet."

Rohacek later addressed the crowd, calling the facility a model of sustainability and telling Bennett, "Your worship, we look forward to working with Peterborough Utilities on future projects."

The solar farm is a great example of co-operation between the city and county, similar to the Peterborough Airport, which is in Cavan Monaghan Township, added Peterborough MPP Jeff Leal.