

Promising Practices



Individuals

Individuals lead the way on renewable energy projects

A local Kanata couple, **Bob and Suzanne Gregory**, provide an excellent example of the benefits of taking advantage of the long term (20 year) contracts available with the Ontario Power Authority. Under the micro Feed-In Tariff (**microFIT**) Program, they are receiving 80.2 cents per kilowatt-hour for their solar electricity.

The microFIT Program has successfully encouraged solar energy production by individuals and communities across Ontario. At their 10 acre property (rocky and agriculturally useless field) on Kerwin Road in rural Kanata, the couple have installed a rare tracker system consisting of **52 solar panels** on a single axis tracker. The reasoning behind this project is quite simple: the economics and the chance to be environmentally friendly.



"We are retired and it helps as an addition to the pension. It looked like we would not have a great deal of difficulty producing somewhere in the area of \$12-15,000 a year," said Bob. He says he checks on his 'baby' every day and thinks of it all as a 'neat and fun concept.'¹

Suzanne highlights the benefits of creating renewable energy: "It's fun to go green. I have a

grandson and we want him to have a better world and by going green, it does help," said Suzanne. "It's our little way of achieving a better world for all the kids of that generation."

By producing roughly 84 kilowatts of renewable energy a day since August 19, 2010, they have saved 72,612 pounds of carbon being pumped into the atmosphere.²

Other renewable electricity projects are made possible under the feed-in tariff (program for projects larger than 10 kilowatts). Take for example, two dairy farming brothers, **Paul and Fritz Klaesi**, who **produce renewable electric power from cattle manure** on their farm near Forrester Falls, just 90 minutes west of downtown Ottawa. Using a 500-cubic metre manure digester and methane-powered generator installed in 2003, the brothers have shrunk their hydro bill to a remarkable \$30 a month from \$2,500. The system generates approximately 750 kilowatt hours every day which translates into roughly enough electricity to power 30 homes.³

The justification for investing in this system, while requiring more money to install and with less return than solar (11 cents compared to solar's 80), was clear to the Klaesis: "... the equipment will pay for itself in less than 10 years, reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions."⁴

Also, this project has been gaining attention from the Ministry of the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture and other Eastern Ontario farmers have been given tours to see how they too can make manure pay (a minimum of 70 animals is required as well as some technical understanding).

Don Hilborn, a Ministry of Agriculture spokesman gives even more reason for this project, saying that

they “produce renewable power reliably, eliminate most pathogens from manure, cut odour by 90 percent and reduce the waste going to landfill sites.”⁵

For those individuals who don't own large parcels of land in rural spaces, however, there are examples of urban, residential transformations to renewable energy. **Mike Gerbis**, the CEO of The Delphi Group, demonstrates this with his decision to install a **solar photovoltaic (PV) system** with the help of Ottawa Solar Power on his own residence in Ottawa. The system is expected to generate about 4,580 kilowatt hours annually for the next 20 years and with a set rate of 80.2 cents per kilowatt hour given by the microFIT Program, this means revenue of approximately \$3,700 per year. Mike's reasoning: “I'm raising awareness in the neighbourhood while generating clean energy and financial return... once installed it's so simple, you forget that it's even up there.”⁶



The solar system on the Gerbis home in Ottawa.

This Promising Practice was brought to you by Ecology Ottawa on behalf of the **Community Energy Network of Eastern Ontario** Encouraging the uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives

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The Network gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation



References:

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- ² Ibid.
- ³ “Cattle power energizes Ontario Hydro.” 4 May 2006. Ottawa Citizen. www.farm-energy.ca/IReF/index.php?page=case-studies-klaesi-ottcit. Accessed March 2011.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Delphi Group. “1000 Solar Rooftops: Going Solar in the Ottawa Area.” Website text. www.delphi.ca/documents/uploads/Solar_Success_Story.pdf. Accessed March 2011.

