

The following was released January 30, 2008 to announce our Ag-CDI grant. Note especially the invitation to local livestock farmers to contact us if they wish to have their farm included in the study.

### ***L.I.F.E. Co-op Inc. to Conduct Local Bio-Gas Feasibility Study***

Local Initiative for Future Energy Co-operative Inc. (L.I.F.E.), a renewable energy Cooperative with a growing membership based in Wilmot Township, has been allocated \$40,000 from Ag-CDI (Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative) to study the feasibility of establishing a cluster of local bio-gas installations on farms in the Waterloo Region.

Bio-gas, also known as "green methane" or "renewable natural gas" is created through the fermentation of organic feedstock – including manure, food processing waste or various plant life and has become big business for farmers all across Europe.

L.I.F.E. Co-op Inc. is aiming for a unique partnership and investment model and will be seeking interested farmers and food processors to share in the benefits bio-gas production provides: the diversion of animal and food waste from landfills or other sites to energy production. The resultant by-product is a rich fertiliser with good nitrogen content but greatly reduced odour.

Various uses for the energy created, besides the production of electricity, range from heating swimming pools, greenhouses, animal facilities, and residences to drying municipal sewage sludge.

Benefits for participants include heat and electricity savings and the prospect of energy creation revenues. The first project could potentially serve as a training facility for bio-gas technicians.

Benefits for our environment include greenhouse gas reduction by capturing methane, one of the worst greenhouse gases commonly released into the atmosphere by any type of livestock production, and groundwater protection due to the fact that pathogens in manure are killed off in the fermenting process in the digester.

Individuals or organizations interested in joining co-operative and participating in the study and the development of bio-gas projects as another local sustainable energy resource are asked to contact L.I.F.E. Co-op Inc. at the contact information provided below. A member of L.I.F.E. Co-op Inc. has been engaged to manage the bio-gas research study, which will be conducted over the next 12 months. A very promising wind resource study done by members of the Co-operative has been well under way for almost 2 years.

L.I.F.E. Co-op Inc. welcomes new members at any time who share the vision to: "Foster Community investments in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

## **Headlines**

### **CPF Pre-Feasibility Grant:**

We received a \$5,000 pre-feasibility grant from Community Power Fund (CPF) for our wind project. We are currently working on the pre-feasibility report, and plan to apply for a Feasibility grant with CPF once the report has been accepted. Here's the link to CPF: <http://www.cpfund.ca/news.html>

### **Introducing our Staff:**

LIFE Co-op has been very fortunate in recruiting two enthusiastic and very talented young people to help us move toward our goals.

Our application to be a host organization with On Co-op's Co-operative Internship Experience Program (CIEP) was successful, and we have hired an intern until the end of October 2008. CIEP is currently in its 5th year, and is subsidized by Service Canada.

We welcome Rhea Tessel to the intern position. A recent graduate of Nipissing University, Rhea was actively involved in promoting environmental issues, and organized a successful Earth Hour event.

Jeff Cressman, who has completed his second year in the Alternative Energy Engineering Technology program at Lambton College in Sarnia, joins us as a Renewable Energy Co-op Student until the end of August. His main focus is on the biogas project. He says he has been "gaining an increasing knowledge of the various possible forms of alternative energy".

This is a very exciting time for LIFE.

### **Web Site Update:**

We are giving our website and promo materials a new look, and preparing to become more visible at events. We invite individual and corporate members to send us a profile telling us why it is important for you to support a sustainable power initiative. Also, what do you do in your home, workplace or business to save energy? If you have a green product or service to offer, there will be spots available to advertise on our web page.

### **Featured member**

#### **Richard Stevenson**

Richard Stevenson was born in Leamington, Ontario and moved to Kitchener in the late 1980s to attend Conestoga College. Upon graduation, he joined MacDonald Steel and currently holds the position of Product Manager in the Environmental Systems Division. Richard has been on the Board of L.I.F.E. for 2.5 years and currently holds the position of Treasurer.

Richard cites a growing concern for the environment as his reason to join L.I.F.E., "I didn't want to stand by the side lines and watch, I wanted to do something to help. The environment is becoming a more of a concern for me and I'm concerned what the future holds for the children of today." After traveling through parts of Europe and seeing multiple wind farms, he found them to be a beautiful addition to the countryside. "When I wind farms, I see clean energy, which means cleaner air, cleaner water and no radioactive waste."

His family has done many things to make their lives more environmentally friendly and will continue to strive for more changes this year. "From CFL bulbs, low flow shower heads, decreasing landfill waste, composting, and rain barrels, we are continually trying to make a small difference ourselves."

At his place of employment, he has worked with Wind Energy Solutions, a midsize turbine

manufacturer, New World Generation, an upcoming Canadian Wind Turbine manufacturer, and AirStream Fans, who build high efficiency replacement fans for steel and cement plants.

Richard is married to Shelley and they have two wonderful children, Connor age 9 and Hayley age 5. They reside in Shingletown, Ontario.

## **In the Media**

(This article originally appeared in *The Baden Outlook – Volume 8, Issue 7*)

### **L.I.F.E. Brings the Winds of Change to Wilmot** *By Teresa Brown*

Nowadays there is much talk about climate change. No matter what your views on the topic, most people agree that traditional sources of energy such as oil are not only harmful to our environment, but are quickly becoming more and more scarce. Here in our cold climate, we Canadians are high-energy consumers; luckily, however, we also have vast land resources, ideal for exploring innovative energy sources such as wind.

And here in Wilmot, we are even luckier to have a group called Local Initiative for Future Energy, or L.I.F.E. (Waterloo-Wellington), a cooperative whose goal is to put wind to work -- and not just for the environment, but also for financial prosperity.

L.I.F.E. was established only a few years ago, and has already done much work toward its goals. Their web site (check it out at [www.lifecoop.ca](http://www.lifecoop.ca)) explains that establishing a wind farm is only part of their vision, which is to “foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint.” Their interests are not only to explore alternative energy sources but to find ways that these earth-friendly energies are fiscally attractive, making them much more realistic and sustainable as valid energy alternatives.

Part of their efforts include working to create a “wind park area,” a section of land within which wind turbines would be effective energy producers and also profitable for their owners. Yvonne Zyma, one of L.I.F.E.’s board

members, explains that they’re “looking at a model where interested land owners join forces with the co-op for knowledge-sharing, planning and harmonizing the construction.” For example, a few wind turbines could be erected by individual farmers, but the development costs would be shared, as would the cost of the turbine. Because L.I.F.E. is a co-op, it’s the collective investment of many that will make their projects work.

The co-op model is already proving to be a successful one for L.I.F.E. . Linda Laepple, another L.I.F.E. board member, explains that anyone may become a lifetime member with a small investment of \$175. “After that,” she explains, “the member is expected to invest a minimum of \$250 once the offering statements are approved. At that point, members can buy shares.” Currently, various business models for the co-op are being explored, but no matter what the details may be, one thing is firmly established: “In a co-op, each member gets one vote, regardless of their investment,” explains Linda. “It’s very transparent, and profit is shared by all.”

In the meantime, the LIFE Co-op has already completed data collection at 30 and 40 metre-high towers in locations throughout the area. The next step is to conduct more testing at a greater height. A building permit has been obtained for an 80-metre tower, the tower itself has been ordered, and the site is ready for its construction. Wind data will be collected from the new 80-metre tower for a full year in order to further establish the validity of turbine construction in our area. It’s a long research period, but the data already collected from the lower towers is very encouraging.

The 55-member L.I.F.E. Co-op continues its work in many other aspects of this project. Environmental assessments, grid assessments, bird studies, and archaeological studies are only a few of the many preparations to be completed for a wind park area. But the Co-op is well-prepared to achieve success: “We have a broad range of expertise in our members,” says Yvonne. “We’re very fortunate.” Indeed, Wilmot Township is fortunate to have such a proactive and forward-looking group in our midst. Not only are we in the middle of innovative technology and thoughtful environmental responsibility, but also fresh investment potential.

As Yvonne adds, “They say that any community-based investment like this ultimately recycles the money through the community seven times.” And that’s an opportunity for Wilmot’s citizens -- and for the Earth -- full of promise for the future.

## Waterloo Region Record:

We received a large number of queries and responses from an article that was the first in the new "Green Region" of the paper:

March 13, 2008

**ROSE SIMONE**  
RECORD STAFF

BADEN

When Linda Laepple arrived from Germany, she was impressed by Canada's strong winds, and surprised at how we waste them.

"In Germany, people have always had to make the best of the limited resources," says Laepple, who has run an organic farm with her husband, Fritz, near Baden since 1998.

Although individuals can install small wind turbines for their own use, Laepple notes that in Europe many small commercial projects operate for everyone's benefit.

"I realized this is not just for me and if we could do it as a community, it would make more sense," says Laepple, president of Local Initiative for Future Energy Co-operative Inc., a community co-operative in Wilmot Township that is developing several local renewable energy projects.

The volunteer-run co-op, which goes by the acronym, L.I.F.E., has about 60 members and business sponsors.

It hopes to sell as many as 3,000 lifetime memberships, which cost \$175.

Members agree to buy a minimum of five shares in the co-op, at \$50 a share, after the Financial Services Commission of Ontario approves its share offer statement.

The money will be used to build up to five two-megawatt wind turbines, each costing about \$4 million, that will generate a maximum 10 megawatts of energy per year for Ontario's power grid by the year 2010.

"The cautious calculation is that there is a seven- to 10-year payback," says Yvonne Zyma of New Hamburg, a member of the co-operative's board.

The group is taking advantage of the Ontario Power Authority's standard offer program, which pays 11 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity produced by renewable energy providers generating less than 10 megawatts of electricity.

That's a higher rate than is paid to bigger renewable energy generators. The idea is to encourage people to invest in small community-based renewable energy projects, Laepple says.

Laepple and another farmer have been taking wind measurements on their farms for several years to compile preliminary data for the wind turbines. The next step is the construction of an 80-metre meteorological tower to get more precise data at different heights over the course of a year.

Based on the preliminary data, the co-op believes each two-megawatt turbine will generate about \$500,000 in revenue per year, Zyma says.

The turbines are a long-term investment for the co-op's shareholders, but the venture isn't primarily about money, says Laepple. It's about sustainable development.

The area around New Hamburg is expecting a huge population boom in the next 25 years, she says. "So the demand for energy is there, and if we can produce it locally using the co-op model, it is an advantage."

The group is conducting a second feasibility study to look into the possibility of developing a number of biogas installations on farms in the area to produce heat for greenhouses, barns and other buildings as well as electricity for the grid. In many ways, the biogas project is easier and cheaper because it doesn't require expensive turbines and the methane can be generated from manure and animal byproducts and green-bin compost waste.

The co-op recently received a \$40,000 grant from the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative to study the feasibility of the project.

Laepple has connections to people in Germany who operate biogas installations and says the local group will benefit from their experience.

As an added bonus, the wind and biogas projects will create local jobs, Laepple says.

The wind project could support about 100 jobs in the building of the turbines. And there could be about 50 jobs at five or six biogas projects on different farms, she says.

The projects have another benefit, she says -- they help keep food prices down.

"People have always had plenty of resources here, in the land, air and water and it was cheap. But that is changing now. The end of cheap energy is also the end of cheap food."

For more information about the co-op, go to the website, [www.lifecoop.ca](http://www.lifecoop.ca), or send an e-mail to [life.info@yahoo.ca](mailto:life.info@yahoo.ca).

[rsimone@therecord.com](mailto:rsimone@therecord.com)



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519-634-1033 (Linda Laepple)

## **A special thank you:**

A number of members of LIFE Co-op have offered their expertise and services in kind. Please accept our thanks:

- Terry Green for his work on the newsletters;
- Leah MacKinnon and Harp Arora for their considerable work on organizing and evaluating a new website design, plus other promotional materials;
- Darryl Huras for taking care of our financial statements;
- Tom Quackenbush, who was on the Board of Directors and is now working diligently behind the scenes;
- Sandy and Jenn Clipsham for research into funding opportunities, and grant applications.
- And many others!

We gratefully acknowledge assistance and support from these organizations:

- Wellington-Waterloo Community Futures Development Corp. (CFDC)
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- Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA)
- Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op)
- Laepple Organic Farm
- Teddy's Bakery
- Stitch Graphix
- Wilmot Centre Missionary Church