



# Newsletter

Issue 7, Fall 2009

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

## From Our Board Chair

Fall is the season to look back and reflect on the activities of the busy spring and summer. With this newsletter we can look back and look forward in a time of change that offers us new opportunities to grow.

Inspired and refueled I returned from a trip to Germany earlier in the year, in my luggage a dozen magazines around renewable energy and pictures from wind and biogas site visits. Energy conservation and sustainable energy generation are part of an *accepted way of life* that has created hundreds of thousands of jobs in Germany alone. It seems Germans are happy to see their investments up on the roof and spinning in the air when stocks trade in the basement.

As the chair of LIFE Co-op I am extremely proud that we, as a co-operative, are able to send this newsletter out to a community that has already come together and supported us in one way or another in the past years and therefore we now have 2 projects that are in an advanced stage of development.

Now, what's the best thing about running a business in the form of a co-operative? For me it is the fact that we are never alone, there are lots of resources and experience to share and there are always willing hands to help out, plus we belong to a strong network of supporting organizations.

**Linda Laepple**

## Our partners

Locally, our partner organization CREW (Community Renewable Energy Waterloo) [www.crewzone.ca](http://www.crewzone.ca) with its strong membership, is an active supporter and advocate, educating people about energy conservation and sustainable energy on a household scale. In the past year we were able to share our meeting room and co-op development experience with a local start up co-operative, LOFT ([www.loftmarket.ca](http://www.loftmarket.ca)) that is producing and delivering local organic food.

On a provincial scale, LIFE is a full member of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) ([www.ontario-sea.org](http://www.ontario-sea.org)) and also the Ontario Cooperative Association (On Co-op) ([www.ontario.coop/pages/index.php?main\\_id=1](http://www.ontario.coop/pages/index.php?main_id=1)). Both organizations support LIFE with their many resources, knowledgeable staff and also financially.

OSEA and the Community Power Fund were key players in the Green Energy Act Alliance that advocated the new Green Energy Act (GEA). LIFE was one of the stakeholders invited to present to the Legislative Committee in London for Bill 150, the proposed Green Energy Act.

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

### **Green Energy Act** – FIT application – Feed in tariff chart to go in here

Jane Story, Manager of Policy and Communications for OSEA, states in an article for Northern Ontario Business that the GEA legislation "recognizes that communities benefit economically much more from small scale, locally owned energy projects than they do from large, centralized power generators... When the owners are local citizens, they are more likely to purchase more local materials for construction and hire more local residents and profits stay in the community too." According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, in conventional energy systems, at least 75 cents of each energy dollar does not stay in the local economy.

### **St. Agatha Wind Project**



The test tower in St. Agatha (red dot on above image) has collected data trouble free for a full year. LIFE received a \$40,000 grant from the Community Power Fund for the development of a wind business plan and feasibility study. We hired Jeff Cressman as our wind project manager and a business plan is almost complete pending clarification of details in the GEA.



# Newsletter

Issue 7, Fall 2009

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

The wind study confirmed a modest rate of return. As a community renewable energy co-operative, we are sensitive to our neighbours and the community. We welcome the GEA setback rules of 550 m from any receptor. Concerned about the extreme negative publicity that wind has been receiving, we did extensive research into issues connected with large wind farms here in Ontario and also did web research in Dutch and German.

Linda Laepple sums up the results of our research by saying, "Starting a wind project and starting a family have a lot in common. All is well when you start out small, one child at a time and you have plenty of time until they are teenagers. Large wind projects in Ontario skipped the getting used to phase and started with teenagers, lots of power but too many in one place can be troublesome. And economics' magic rule says more is better, but how come families rarely aim for or start out with 16 children?"

LIFE is currently receiving quotes from turbine manufacturers including CWind, an Ontario based new turbine company, which has just announced a partnership with Linamar of Cambridge, which has received Federal funding for their *Green & Fuel Efficient Powertrain Project*.

As an advanced project, we were encouraged to apply for a feed in tariff (FIT) contract. Consequently, LIFE Co-op applied to the Community Power for extra funding so we can hire professionals to investigate how we can meet the OPA requirements during the short FIT launch period ending the end of November.

## Biogas

The biogas feasibility study and business plan were completed prior to the announcement of the GEA. Therefore, the business plan funded by Ag-CDI and prepared by Russ Christianson is now being reviewed taking the new feed in tariff rules into consideration.

Biogas projects up to 100kw will now receive 19 Cents per kWh up from 11 cents. The size of the project depends on the farms input material, mainly manure, and the profitability depends partly on the opportunity to sell the heat created by the motor of the generator. Depending on the farm's needs, the installation's methane gas could be used directly to heat a boiler of a greenhouse, for example.

We are fortunate and pleased to have met with a number of local experts in biogas and related fields to help plan our next steps. LIFE's biogas co-op model has been well received by the farmers and the industry. It even attracted a venture capitalist, but shares in a co-op stay at par value (and with Co-op member-owners) and never trade on the big exchange.



# Newsletter

Issue 7, Fall 2009

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"



LOFT Co-op farmers have a keen interest in sustainable energy, particularly for their greenhouse production. LIFE and LOFT, along with Shanco Holdings, have jointly applied for funding through Rural Economic Development (RED) for a feasibility study to renovate the Wellesley Mill in Wellesley, ON. The Mill is envisioned to become a centre for sustainable development showcasing renewable energy and offering tours and courses around sustainable food production and processing. It has the potential to become LIFE's permanent home.

## Funding

Countless hours have been spent researching funding opportunities, preparing applications and reporting to funders. Thanks to the many volunteer hours that member-owners and board members have contributed to the management and day to day operation of the Co-op, we were able to start paying back a small portion of the CFDC loan received for the start up of LIFE Co-op.

### ***LIFE gratefully acknowledges recent funding received:***

- \$40,000 for the St. Agatha Wind project Feasibility study from the Community Power Fund (CPFund) in Spring 2009;
- \$3,500 Technical Assistance funding from On Co-op has just been approved. Co-op developer Russ Christianson has been hired to do an assessment of LIFE as an organization, which will then allow LIFE to proceed with member recruitment, marketing and a capitalization plan.



# Newsletter

Issue 7, Fall 2009

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

## ***We have applied for funding from:***

- Community Adjustment Fund to develop a renewable energy hub (unsuccessful);
- Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) in July to further the Biogas project. LIFE is among the projects that moved into the second stage of evaluation. The selection committee will make a list of recommendations to the minister of state responsible for co-operatives. We expect decisions to be made in October;
- LIFE recently applied to the last round of funding from the CPFund. The remaining funds are meant to support projects expected to be built in the next couple of years during the FIT launch. We will know if we are successful very soon, and it will be a very busy 2 months if the funding is approved.

## **Office Location**

In August, LIFE moved its office next door to share office space with MS Business Solutions. The move saved the Co-op money, and provided a location that is staffed during office hours. The address remains: *125 Snyder's Road E., Baden N3A 2V4 (no unit number).*

## **Upcoming and Recent Events**

- Saturday, October 24: Renewable Energy Workshops at Conestoga College, Doon. ([www.crewzone.ca/news\\_event.cfm?eventID=263](http://www.crewzone.ca/news_event.cfm?eventID=263))
- November 15-16: **1st Annual OSEA Community Power Conference** at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building. ([www.cpconference.ca](http://www.cpconference.ca)) Join Conference Honorary Chair **Dr. David Suzuki**, industry leaders, government officials, local community groups and many others.
- Saturday, November 21: **LIFE Co-op Annual General Meeting**. Details to follow.
- March 8-12, 2010: **2nd Annual Canadian Farm and Food Biogas Conference and Exhibition**, London Convention Centre, London, ON. ([www.gtmconference.ca/site/index.php/canadian-farm-and-food-biogas](http://www.gtmconference.ca/site/index.php/canadian-farm-and-food-biogas))



# Newsletter

Issue 7, Fall 2009

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

## Past Events

LIFE board members presented to the committee regarding the Region of Waterloo's Regional Official Plan in the spring to encourage renewable energy; we had a very wet booth at the Wellesley Home and Garden Show in April; LIFE hosted a workshop for the feasibility of a Centre for Community Innovation and Design (CCID) in July; we had our annual booth at Potatofest at Laepple Organic Farm in August; board member Louis Silcox presented to students and their parents at the New Hamburg Fall Fair.

## LIFE in the Media

LIFE has been featured in The Ontario Farmer, the New Hamburg independent and Advantage, the Ontario Co-operative Association's annual magazine.

## Members' handbook

Developed by board member Rob Yost, the handbook contains information for potential, new and existing members of LIFE. Hard copies will be available at our Annual General Meeting, or visit [www.lifecoop.ca/PDF/Members\\_Handbook\\_2009.pdf](http://www.lifecoop.ca/PDF/Members_Handbook_2009.pdf).

## Investment opportunities: Membership Shares, Preference Shares and Sweat Equity (Volunteering)

The articles of incorporation allow us to have a maximum of 3,000 member-owners. At this stage we can offer our members a total of 4,000 Preference shares at \$50 each. These Preference shares are considered seed money and, along with grants and loans, allow us to develop our projects.

To raise more funds we have to file an Offering Statement with the Financial Service Commission of Ontario (FSCO). For member-owners interested in becoming an early investor please contact us to see if shares are still available. All member-owners are encouraged to ask for the latest copy of our financial statement. To do so, e-mail [life.info@yahoo.ca](mailto:life.info@yahoo.ca).

If you are not a member-owner yet, you are invited to join us by downloading a membership application form from our website and if you are a member-owner, please pass on this newsletter and encourage others to join. We anticipate 500 members to invest in our first 2 projects, and own and share the dividends.



# Newsletter

Issue 7, Fall 2009

"To foster community investment in sustainable resources to reduce our environmental footprint"

## Upcoming Annual General Members Meeting

Mark your calendars for November 21<sup>st</sup> 2009. Further details and a full agenda will follow, or contact us at [life.info@yahoo.ca](mailto:life.info@yahoo.ca).

Best regards,

Yvonne Zyma, Secretary

Local Initiative for Future Energy (LIFE) Co-op ([www.lifecoop.ca](http://www.lifecoop.ca))