



Local Initiative for Future Energy Co-op (LIFE)

P.O. Box 5158, Baden ON, N3A 4J3

www.lifecoop.ca

Issue 6, Spring 2009

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Introduction

Hello everyone. This is LIFE's first newsletter using GroupMail, so please bear with me as I learn how to use the software. I previously sent this out to some of you, but received comments from one of the dialup people that a text version would be preferable for them, so I am attaching that. I appreciate help, so if you have experience (and wish to help!) please let me know.

~ Yvonne Zyma

Green Energy Act

Bill 150, The Green Energy and Green Economy Act (GEA), was tabled at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on February 23, 2009. According to the Green Energy Act Alliance, the vision of the GEA is "To make Ontario a global leader in the development of renewable energy, clean distributed energy and conservation, creating thousands of jobs, economic prosperity, energy security, and climate protection."

Developing renewable energy is very important on many levels. First is that it provides a multitude of investment opportunities, which is important in this perilous economic time. Second, it offsets the usage of fossil fuels and other finite resources for energy. As the fossil fuels get offset, the amount of pollutants emitted into the environment each day will become less and less.

There are a few points in the GEA that are of particular interest. The first is that the GEA



Upcoming Events:

- **Wellesley Home Show**
Wellesley arena
Apr 29 - May 1
5:30 AM - 9:00 PM
- **Wilmot Healthy Communities Week**
Wilmot Recreation Complex
Saturday, May 9
- **Sustainable Development Fair**
Trinity United Church
Kitchener, ON
Wednesday, June 3
10 :00 AM - 2:00 PM

creates a new type of co-operative called a renewable energy co-operative. A renewable energy co-operative is restricted to generating and selling electricity from renewable sources. It would operate in the same manner that any other co-op would operate with a few differences. The first difference is that once the co-op is turning a profit, it is able to pass by-laws that govern the way that the profit is distributed. This reduces the constraint in the way the profit can be distributed removing an existing constraint.

The GEA proposes various changes to the Co-operative Corporations Act, which include amendments to recognize the uniqueness of renewable energy co-ops. In the past, co-operatives found it very difficult to sell the power it would produce because of the legal aspects of the co-op. Before, at least 50% of a co-op's business would have to be done with its members. This is especially difficult when considering selling electricity to the grid. The difficulty arises in the question of how can you prove that the electricity that is being sold to the grid is going to the members' homes? Now, the Ministry of Finance is not permitted to convert a renewable energy co-op into a business corporation because over 50% of its business is with non-members. This will give various organizations more flexibility in their joint ventures to produce renewable energy.

Of particular interest is a change in the process for appealing approval decisions. This amendment gives people who would otherwise be entitled to seek a hearing the right to appeal a



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renewable energy approval decision. However, the project will not be delayed or stopped unless it can be proven that the project "will cause serious and irreversible harm to plant life, animal life, human health or safety or to the natural environment".

This is especially important in combating the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) attitude that many of those opposing renewable energy have, but will allow valid claims to be heard and considered. This amendment will serve to minimize the trivial opposition to the project while acting as a safeguard against renewable energy projects being developed with lowered environmental standards.

For more information about the Green Energy Act go to: <http://www.greenenergyact.ca> and to sign the Green Energy Act Petition go to: http://www.greenenergyact.ca/Page.asp?PageID=1266&ContentID=953&SiteNodeID=204&BL_ExpandID=46

The Standing Committee on General Government is meeting to consider Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes. Linda Laepple, President of LIFE Co-op presented the public hearing in London on Wednesday, April 13, 2009 along with other stakeholders. Linda's presentation is included.



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Wind Project

LIFE was recently awarded a \$40,000 grant from the Community Power Fund (CPF) for the Feasibility Study and related activities for the St. Agatha Wind Project. The 60 m. test tower at the site has been collecting data since August 2008, and the grant will allow a year's worth of data to be audited. With the financial assistance of the CPF, LIFE is now poised to hire a project manager to oversee completion of a business plan and grid connection assessment.

The \$40,000 comes on the heels of the completion of the Pre-Feasibility phase, which CPF also supported with a \$5,000 grant. Thanks to the assistance and support of the Community Power Fund, LIFE is now one step closer to realizing its goals with this project.

Press release from the Community Power Fund:
<http://campaign-archive.com/?u=2cb999958b7eabead44662f5f&id=92abfb885b>

Biogas Project

Many consultants' reports were reviewed, financial constraints were analyzed, local knowledge of biogas was explored, and LIFE Co-op's president, Linda Laepple, made a research trip to Germany. The result is that the board of directors has endorsed the development of the Biogas project in multiple phases.

Phase One involves building a pilot biogas digestion and energy conversion system in the most feasible site to gain hands-on experience



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and provide preliminary training to LIFE's members. Data from the site would be used to better define our business plan and Phase Two, which is currently being contracted out.

The site will also be used to train a service technician and to showcase our project to farmers, LIFE members / investors and members of the general public. The project management team has identified two ideal sites for a pilot installation, but more time is needed to find or develop the most suitable technology.

Phase Two involves building a modular prototype which will be a refined version of the Phase One pilot system. We envision the second phase to be multiple installations on separate farms producing up to 1 MW of electrical power combined, managed collectively by LIFE Co-op. We would also like to be able to find a use for the waste heat generated by the engines: heating homes, buildings or greenhouses.

The biogas project was at a standstill awaiting funding until late last week, when the final phase of funding was received from Ag CDI, the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative, which supported this project with a \$40,000 grant. For more information:

http://www.coopzone.coop/about_ag_cdi

Next Steps for LIFE Co-op

The co-op plans to continue with the wind and biogas projects. As mentioned above, biogas project funding has been received and the business plan can be completed. The board of



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directors has recently met with an Ontario based wind turbine developer to explore a possible partnership. The wind project will require the completion of the grid connection assessment and continued positive data from the test location. We will be conducting public meetings to gain support, conducting landowner negotiations, and getting quotes from manufacturers.

Members Handbook

Thanks to board member Rob Yost, LIFE now has a members' handbook for current and future members. There are print copies at LIFE's office, or you may request a copy by emailing life.info@yahoo.ca

Member Profile: Jeff Cressman

Jeff Cressman is a student at Lambton College in the Alternative Energy Engineering Technology program. He is a candidate to graduate in April and is exploring his options as to what he will do once he graduates. One of his possible avenues could include an engineering degree at one of the fine universities in the province, although working at home on the family farm near Wellesley is also an attractive option.

Whatever he does is sure to include the renewable energy field. Even though these tough economic times do make it difficult for renewable energy, it is a growing field and is sure to demand the skill set of Jeff. Jeff has been a member of LIFE since he joined almost a year ago



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when he was hired as the Renewable Energy Co-op student last summer. At that time, Jeff worked primarily with the biogas study, but he has continued to work for the co-op on a part-time basis until he finishes his schooling.

Share Your Experiences and Ideas With Others

We have been getting emails from people who have inspiring personal stories of projects that decrease their environmental footprint. With that in mind, LIFE Co-op is exploring the possibility of hosting a monthly get together for like-minded individuals. How are you walking the walk? Have you installed a geothermal system, and would like to share with others? Do you have experience with solar? Or a unique rainwater irrigation system? We would like to open this to members of the public. Contact me if you are interested: life.info@yahoo.ca

Thank you for your interest in Local Initiative for Future Energy (LIFE) Co-op. Feel free to share this newsletter with others.

Yvonne Zyma, Secretary