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SLRD EMBRACES COMMUNITY SOLAR TREND WITH NEW ARRAY IN GOLD BRIDGE:

Project made possible thanks to federal Gas Tax Fund and provincial Community Energy Leadership Program

Pemberton, BC – Three community venues in the Upper Bridge River Valley of Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Electoral Area A will see the installation of photovoltaic (PV) solar energy systems, as part of a foray into community-owned sustainable energy, seeded by the province's new Community Energy Leadership Program (CELP), and brought to fruition using federal Gas Tax Funds allocated to the SLRD.

The small-scale grid-tied photovoltaic arrays are being installed on properties owned by the SLRD – at the Gold Bridge Transfer Station, Gold Bridge Community Complex and the Haylmore Heritage Site. The initiative is projected to save the community more than \$2000 in energy costs in the first year of operation, exporting power back to the grid via BC Hydro's Net Metering program. A feasibility study investigated 9 potential locations for solar harvesting potential in Area A. The three chosen are expected to deliver 17,300 – 20,200 kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District was one of 7 projects funded in the first year of the CELP fund, an Innovative Clean Energy initiative of the province of BC. CELP, established to support vibrant and resilient communities in BC through investments in energy efficiency and clean energy, is currently funded with \$1.3 million over three years (2015/16 through 2017/18). The \$25,000 awarded to the SLRD through CELP is being supplemented with \$53,000 from Electoral Area A's allocation of federal Gas Tax Funds to complete the three installations.

[Download the provincial news release about the program here.](#)

Says Area A Director, Debbie Demare, "The feasibility process to identify the solar energy we're capturing was very rigorous and scientific, and that enabled us to build a case based on data, not guesswork. I was quite surprised by the locations that weren't feasible – solar energy is a lot more complicated than just whether or not you can see the sun."

Located 105 km west of Lillooet and 77 km north of Pemberton, Area A is home to the Bridge River complex, one of BC Hydro's largest hydroelectric assets, generating 492 megawatts (MW) annually in hydroelectric power, and providing 6 - 8 % of BC's total electrical supply.

"It's fitting to generate renewable power from natural assets, that we can retain locally," says Demare. "Even on a small scale, this initiative is a big step in understanding how to energize a community, and bring Bridge River Valley closer to its vision of being a 'sustainable community in the wilderness'. We're proud to be the first community solar project in the Regional District."

The Gold Bridge Solar Photovoltaic Renewable Energy Initiative was originally inspired by explorations the Bridge River Community Valley Association made into solar-powering an off-grid Gold Rush-era heritage property they lease from the SLRD.

The Haylmore Heritage site serves as a summer tourism information booth, visitor attraction and artisan store, and is the location of the house, mine recording office and placer mine originally belonging to Will Haylmore, one of the original surveyors in the Bridge River Valley. As Deputy Mining Recorder, Haylmore ensured the orderly staking of gold-bearing ground for 32 years, during the region's heyday as the richest mining district in British Columbia. When the solar array is installed, the historic 1920s-era site will again be the location for resource harvesting as the community stakes its claim for a resilient, clean-powered, sustainable future

Learn More

- Gold Bridge Solar PV project: www.slrd.bc.ca/goldbridgesolar
- Federal Gas Tax Fund: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/gtf-fte-eng.html>
- Provincial Community Energy Leadership Program: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/electricity-alternative-energy/community-energy-systems/community-energy-leadership-program>
- Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) Fund: www.gov.bc.ca/innovativecleanenergyfund

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