

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



Box 66, 303 Fifth St., Rainy River, ON P0W 1L0 Ph. 807-852-3815, Fax. 807-852-1863, Email. westendweekly@tbaytel.net Vol. 29, No. 19 Wednesday, October 29, 2014
Serving the Rainy River District for over 23 years! Read us on line at www.westendweekly.ca. Check out the pictures on line. They are so good!

New project to provide 25 million watts solar power



Pilings, or screws, waiting panels, beside a road before gravel was used. It was easy to understand, after seeing this, why there have been gravel trucks going into the sites all summer.



Trenches are dug between the pilings. The panels connect to wires which travel along a trough to collector panels situated between the rows of panels. These then connect to cables that are laid into the troughs ending at the vault.



Once the energy reaches the vault it will be transferred to the ON Hydro lines and sent to the distribution centre in Barwick.



Over 800 truckloads of equipment were delivered to the sites.



No equipment is moved or other heavy work done until a safety report is designed by Glen Lagacé, the Safety Manager. If needed a design is drawn up. When the report is complete, the work to be done is checked by a member of the safety team. Worker safety is taken very seriously by Black & MacDonald.



Glen Lagacé, Safety Manager for Black & MacDonald, and Jim Leonard, Chief of RRFN spent 45 minutes showing the three sites and explaining the work being done. Glen lives in Ottawa and works out of Toronto. He is renting a local home.



Chief Leonard points to the board showing 13 subcontractors. "At this time we have 133 workers on site with 30 more expected," he explains.



Glen Lagacé shows one of the safety equipment rooms, and explains that there are several first aid stations on the sites, so that any injured worker can get primary triage immediately then come to the safety station for more aid.



"It's a fun project, that's for sure, and so good for the local economy," said Glen Lagacé

by Charleen Gustafson
One mile north of the Highway on Morley-Dilke Road, Canadian companies from Southern Ontario, Kenora, Thunder Bay and the Rainy River District are working with AMEC Black and Mc-

Donald Joint Venture, the Engineer, Procure and Construction firm, to perform construction of the Solar Project by mid December. When construction is completed, two sites will deliver 10 megawatt of energy and the other will

deliver 5 megawatt. That's 25 million watts.
Solar projects need land that is available, with considera-

tion given to the neighbours and how the land is being used nearby. First Nations representatives were consulted to ensure that no cultural artifacts are present. The Ministry of Environment needed to study any conflicts with indigenous species. The site needed access to power lines and a distribution station.

And, the land cannot be prime farm land. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs has a land classification from 1 to 7 with 1 being prime agricultural land and 7 being of no use for agriculture. Non-rooftop solar projects are not allowed on land classified as 1, 2 or 3. The land at the chosen site is classified as Class 4.

Once the three sites were located, the company that did the initial research needed buyers for the project. At this point Jim Leonard, Chief of RRFN, bought the project with partner Connor, Clark and Lunn and Terma Financial. "Not one cent of government money was used," said Leonard, "We borrowed the money. Manulife is our bank." The project owners do not own the land. The three sites are leased for 20 years. "We will also be paying about one million dollars a year to the local municipalities in taxes for the next 20 years," said Leonard. "During this construction phase, there are

about 60 to 70 local workers who have employment. And if you include the truck drivers, there would be at least 100. That also helps our local economy," he continued.

The Rainy River First Nations Solar Generation Project Report 2013 on their web page www.rainyriverfirstnations.com stated "...the project is to be designed and built by one company. The company that was selected was [AMEC] Black & MacDonald [Joint Venture]".

According to the report, the project construction phase involves fencing, site preparation, road construction, culverts, landscaping, underground wiring, installation of Helical Piles, racking, support and installation of PV panels, installation of transformers and inverters, and installation of a power line. The report continued "... wish to have as much First Nation participation in the project as possible, and also to utilize local contractors and labour as is feasible." This has created many jobs for people in our district, including engineers, apprentices or licensed electricians, truck drivers and labourers.

Sub-contractor Moncrief Construction Ltd, from Kenora, hired local businesses Dennis Robinson Ltd, T&K Sharp Construction and Judson M L Trucking Ltd. to make the roads inside the fields. They also removed some topsoil from the roadbeds. This is being stored, to return the land back to its original condition in

the future.

The elevation of the land was surveyed to ensure that when the piles were screwed in they would be the exact height and in the exact position needed for the racks and panels. This was computerized. TBT Engineering from Thunder Bay then used that data to plot out the exact position of the piles in the fields.

Drainage ditches were dug. A contract was developed with Morley Township to maintain the municipal roads.

Meanwhile, adjacent land was prepared for the bobolinks that were to lose their nesting grounds.

ON Hydro, through Safeline Utilities Inc, hired Harold McQuaker from Emo to put in the poles and anchors for the hydro lines extending from the site to the energy distribution unit in Barwick.

The materials used for construction and for maintenance need to be produced in Canada as much as is possible. The PV modules, as an example, were manufactured by Toronto based Celestica. The gravel came from local pits.

As the trucks unloaded the piles and other supplies, workers in the first field began to position the piles. TBT Engineering staff worked with the crews to ensure that the piles were the exact height, in the exact position and were plumb. Then the solar racks and panels were put on the piles.

Photographers' showcase



There was a partial solar eclipse visible in Fort Frances on October 23, 2014 from approximately 4:15 p.m. to sunset. The Moon passed in front of the Sun and blocked more than 60% of the Sun's surface at the peak of the eclipse. These images were taken using filters designed specifically for viewing the Sun without harming the human eye or camera sensors. Never, ever look at the Sun with the naked without properly designed solar filters. Images taken by Lauri Kangas, Alberton

Please turn to page 2



Martin Dufresne
275-8916
852-4237
274-6688



Are you paying too much for your insurance?
Call us for a free no obligation quote.



Walter Bloedow
274-6688

Proudly Serving the Entire Rainy River District

229 Scott Street, Fort Frances 1-800-289-9917