

Energy-efficiency blitz rolling along on Main Street

Qualifying businesses receive up to \$1,000 in free conservation upgrades

Newmarket, Ontario (August 14, 2008):

Over the next few weeks, electrical contractors will be doing energy-efficiency upgrades for more than sixty businesses on Main Street in Newmarket. Up to \$1,000 of energy-saving products and services is available to eligible small businesses through the *Power Savings Blitz*, a program of the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) supported locally by Newmarket Hydro. Participants in the program save money on electricity costs and help lessen the burden on the environment associated with power generation.

"We're pleased that Newmarket Hydro is the first utility in Ontario to launch a full-scale implementation of this innovative conservation program," says Paul Ferguson, president of Newmarket Hydro.

Based on a successful pilot run by the OPA in the summer of 2007, this first phase of the program in Newmarket is focused largely on upgrades to lighting systems. The older fluorescent tube lights typically found in stores and businesses are much less efficient than newer lighting technology. But these existing fixtures can often be retrofitted with new electronic ballasts and energy-saving tube lighting that uses about one-third less electricity.

"It's relatively simple for our licensed contractors to retrofit that old four-tube fluorescent fixture with a new ballast and replace the four older tubes with only two energy-saving tubes that deliver improved lighting," says Larry Herod, Newmarket Hydro's director of distribution services.

It's estimated that on Main Street alone, more than 4,000 older inefficient fluorescent tubes will be taken out of service and approximately 1,100 fixtures will be upgraded.

"Although lighting may not represent a large part of the operating costs for many small businesses, the total amount of electricity used by lights in this sector is significant across Newmarket Hydro's service area," adds Larry Herod. "Anything we can do to help our business customers become more energy efficient is a benefit not only to them but to all of us concerned about saving electricity and protecting the environment."

The *Power Savings Blitz* is a free program for eligible small businesses and completely voluntary. Newmarket Hydro contacted businesses on Main Street, with the cooperation of Lisa Thomas, chair of the Main Street District BIA (Business Improvement Area), to introduce this initial phase of the program. A representative of the utility visited each eligible business to offer an onsite assessment of lighting and other electricity-saving opportunities and to identify the free improvements available. With all the assessments complete and work orders signed, teams of licensed electricians have been dispatched to visit the businesses and begin the upgrades.

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“This is clearly a good thing for our local businesses and stores,” says Lisa Thomas, chair of the Main Street District BIA. “Not only do we benefit from free upgrades that make our operations more energy efficient, but we also help save the environment. And that’s why I encourage all business owners to participate.”

The Main Street business area is “only the beginning,” says Newmarket Hydro’s Larry Herod. “A timetable is being developed to offer this program to all eligible businesses in Newmarket over the next three years.”

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