

Solar rescue

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUPPLIERS GAINING INTEREST IN BARBADOS MARKET

by Roy R. Morris

Government's incentives to initiate wide-scale use of solar technology across Barbados is already generating major interest in and outside of Barbados.

Barbados TODAY investigation have revealed that a major alternative energy player in Canada, has already begun the first step toward the capture of the sun energy with photovoltaic panels installed on utility poles around the country in an operation that would offset the huge cost of the street lights that burn every night around the country.

Vice president of Operations with Harvester Energy Canada, Mark Burrows, confirmed that officials from the company were recently in Barbados, and that the initiatives taken by Government in the Budget delivered last week by Minister of Finance Chris Sinckler would definitely propel their interest.

He explained that while the panels would not directly power the street lights, the amount of energy fed into the national grid each day during daylight hours, would more than offset the amount of energy used at night to power the lights. Each panel is expected to produce 1.1 kilowatt hours of electricity daily, with peak production occurring at the time of day when demand on the BL&P's grid is at its highest.



Solar light pole.

While he did not speak to the numbers, Barbados TODAY research revealed Barbados Light & Power's inventory of poles stands at approximately 70,000 across the island, with street lamps on most of them, while several hundred dedicated lamp posts are in place to light the ABC and Spring Garden Highways. Sources estimated that Government's bill to BL&P for this street lights amounts to approximately \$5 million annually.

Burrows explained that their preliminary observation showed that while some areas would not be appropriate for the solar panels because of the level of vegetation,

there were wide open stretches of land that would make the project very worthwhile. In fact, it is expected that at least 70 per cent of the island's electricity poles will be suitable for the installation of the panels.

He said Harvester Energy had already had some discussions with Government officials and other players in the industry and in light of the stance taken in its Budget, would now be pressing full steam ahead to bring the project to fruition.

The company already has "a significant number" of its systems in use in the United States, Canada and Australia and wants to make Barbados a model for the Caribbean.

In a statement to Barbados TODAY, Burrows said: "Harvester Energy Canada's utility pole mounted solar energy system will provide clean local distributed power generation in the community as part of the Barbados electricity supply mix.

"The system consists of a single 240-280 watt solar panel, a smart energy module with an inverter, two way wireless Smart Grid communicator, sensors, digital meter, and a pole mounting system to attach to utility poles and street lights. The solar unit generates power directly to the distribution system reducing upstream demand.

"Harvester's pole mounted solar energy system integrates this highly distributed solar energy into the current grid and provides a foundation for a Smart Grid system. The system takes advantage of the solar power generation to enhance the distribution grid reliability as a platform for system voltage stabilisation, which is important on long lines in rural areas and in urban areas with aged infrastructure.

"It also provides fault location for trouble shooting problems on the distribution network as well. The system of panels is monitored via a wireless network." roymorris@barbadostoday.bb

NEWS TODAY

Bajan among dead in plane crash

A Barbadian resident in Canada for more than 20 years has lost his life in a plane crash there.

Randolph Reid, 57, formerly of Regent Hill, Pinelands, St. Michael was among 12 people who perished when Flight 6560, a chartered Boeing 737-200 owned by First Air airline's went down near the Arctic Circle over the weekend. There were three survivors.

Barbadian Kammie Holder, who is a friend of one of Reid's workmates at the South Camp Inn in Resolute Nunavut, Canada told Barbados TODAY the tragedy had left that individual, Kayleigh Burrowes, and others there shaken.

"He (Reid) was in Canada over 20 years and worked at South Camp Inn as cook for over 20 years. He was returning to work as the plane is chartered by his boss Aziz Kheraj, who owns the South Camp Inn in Resolute Nunavut. A total of six staff members were lost," Holder said.

Resolute Bay is located 600 kilometres north of the Arctic circle on the southern shore of Cornwallis Island and is part of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut and the second most northern community in North America.

When the plane crashed it was travelling from Yellowknife to Resolute with the more than a dozen people on board, including four crew members.

In a statement confirming the crash, First Air said the plane's last reported communication was at 12:40 p.m. CT, approximately eight kilometres from the airport, and that the plane went down 10 minutes later.

Police said the survivors were two adults

Barbadian Randolph Reid was among 12 people who perished when a Boeing 737-200 went down near the Arctic Circle over the weekend.



and a child who were all transported to the Qikiqtani General Hospital in Iqaluit and that one of the adults is in critical condition, police said.

Canadian news reports quoted Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who is scheduled to travel to Resolute on Monday for his annual

trip to the Arctic, as saying he was "deeply saddened by news of this tragic plane crash".

Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak said the loss was particularly hard for many of the closely knit northern towns and hamlets.

"We have 25 communities in Nunavut and we always feel the pain and loss of those

who perished as if they were part of our community. We have such a connectedness in all of our communities. So our hearts and thoughts go out to all those affected throughout and especially those in Resolute," she said. (SC)