

NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed for Release October 1, 2009 9:00 pm

2009 Energy & Climate Action Awards - Leadership in Action

The **Town of Gibsons** has won the **2009 Energy & Climate Action Award** in the **Community Planning and Development** category for development of the **Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan**. The centerpiece of this neighbourhood plan is the new **Upper Gibsons Geo-exchange District Energy Utility**. The first of its kind in North America, this system, which will be owned and operated by the municipality, will provide renewable earth energy heating to all new buildings in Upper Gibsons, reducing GHG emissions from heating and hot water by an astonishing 96% (1,450 tonnes). This innovative project will result in energy cost savings of \$350,000 annually and about 1/3 of that will be returned to residents as energy cost savings.

The **District of Lake Country** has won the award in the **Corporate Operations** category for the **Lake Country Hydroelectric Generating Station**, a low impact micro-hydro project that harnessed the power of the existing high elevation water supply system to produce clean, green energy. The municipally owned and operated hydro project, which is the first of this type to sell power back to BC Hydro, will produce approximately 3900 Megawatt-hours of emission-free, renewable electricity per year, enough to power roughly 400 homes.

The awards were presented at the Union of B.C. Municipalities Convention by **John Yap, Minister of State for Climate Action**. "These communities are showing how local governments can be creative in building energy efficient and resilient communities," said Yap. "Local governments that address their energy footprint are helping in the fight against climate change while at the same time saving money."

In accepting the award, **Gibsons Mayor Barry Janyk** said "We have committed to creating a unique and dynamic, "energy-smart" community and the Upper Gibsons Geo-exchange Utility is just one example of how we will achieve this objective. The Town truly appreciates the recognition that the honour of receiving CEA's award provides." **Lake Country Mayor James Baker** noted upon receiving the award that "the District of Lake Country is proud to be able to produce emission-free renewable energy from the existing water supply system. We are reducing our collective carbon footprint, minimizing our environmental impact and generating revenue for the District."

The awards are organized annually by the **Community Energy Association** in partnership with the Province of British Columbia, Union of British Columbia Municipalities and BC Hydro. "The awards celebrate leadership of local governments taking action on climate change and energy. This year's winners demonstrate that energy planning, energy efficiency and renewable energy are possible no matter where you live in the province," said **Richard White, Co-Chair, Community Energy Association and Director of Community Development, City of North Vancouver**.



308-402 West Pender Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1T6
T: (604) 628-7076 F: (778) 786-1613 www.communityenergy.bc.ca

NEWS RELEASE

Honourable Mentions were awarded to:

- **City of Prince George** for implementing a broad spectrum of innovative initiatives demonstrating city-wide dedication and commitment to reducing greenhouse gases.
- **Corporation of Delta** for its Climate Change Initiative, a comprehensive, progressive and dynamic climate action strategy.

A record number of entries were received this year. Entries in the **Corporate Operations** category included Capital Regional District, Abbotsford/Mission, Colwood, Coquitlam, Dawson Creek, Richmond, Delta, Lake Country, Saanich and Whistler. In the **Community Planning and Development** category, entries included Burns Lake, Colwood, Gibsons, City of North Vancouver, Prince George, Port Moody and Sparwood.

The Community Energy Association is the 'first stop' for local government leaders addressing energy sustainability and climate action. Members include the Province, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, Union of BC Municipalities, Planning Institute of BC, BC Transit, Translink, BC Hydro, Terasen Gas, Pacific Northern Gas, Fortis BC and BC Transmission Corporation.

-30 -

Contact:

Norm Connolly, Executive Director, Community Energy Association
Ph: 604-628-7076 Cell: 778-960-7312

