

Watt's Happening? #101

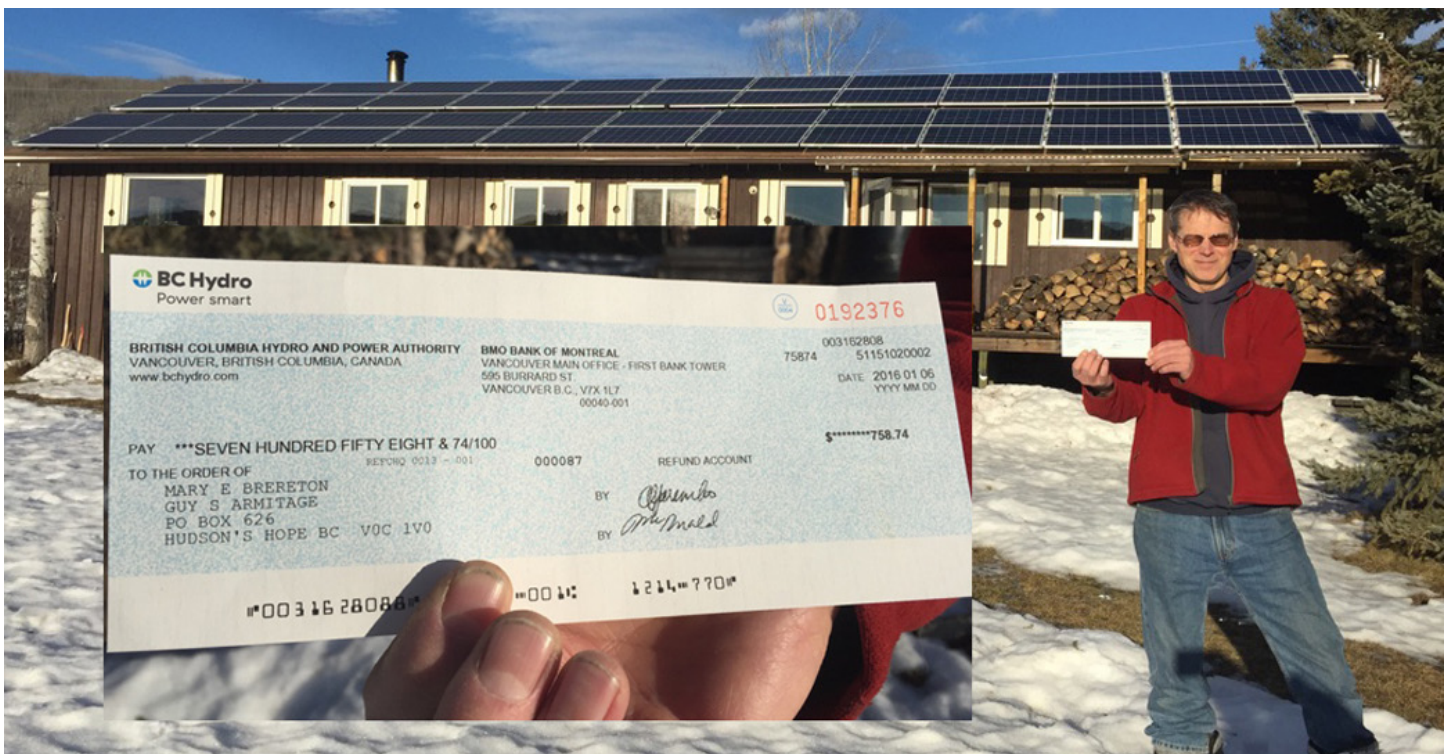
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FREE SOLAR WORKSHOP in Hudson's Hope, March 4



Hudson's Hope homeowner Guy Armitage proudly displays his first cheque from BC Hydro for excess solar power he has fed into the grid. His home is 100% solar powered with a solar array designed and installed by Peace Energy Cooperative. Lean more at Peace Energy's upcoming solar workshop in Hudson's Hope.

How well does solar power work in the Peace Country? Can I use solar to reduce my electrical bills? How much does solar cost and is it a good investment?

These are a few of the questions that will be answered at a Solar Workshop to be held at the Pearkes Center in Hudson's Hope on Saturday, March 4, 1:00 – 3:00. It will be presented, free of charge, by Peace Energy Cooperative.

"There's a lot of interest in solar now, but not much

good information about solar in the Peace Country," explains Greg Dueck, Peace Energy Co-op's solar consultant. "We've been designing and installing lots of grid-tied solar up here for three years now with excellent results, but the first step is always education and information. That's what this workshop is about."

Dueck says most Peace Country homeowners can put a serious dent in their electrical bills with solar power and there are excellent tax incentives for business owners who go solar.

“We know for a fact that it works wonderfully up here and is a good investment for any home owner or business, but there are still a lot of myths that need to be dispelled,” says Dueck.

FEEDING THE GRID

Today, most solar power systems are “grid-tied” – they feed power into the grid when the sun is shining, then take it back out of the grid when it isn’t. It’s like the electrical grid is your own personal, immense battery. Most electrical utilities, like BC Hydro, now welcome grid-tie solar.

This author has had his Dawson Creek business solar grid-tied for three years now, and I can report that the system works perfectly. For each of those years I have:

- 1) produced more electricity from my roof than the building used;
- 2) received payment (or credit) from BC Hydro for that excess power three years in a row;
- 3) powered everything in my building (lights, computers, kitchen appliances, furnace fan etc.) with clean solar electricity from my roof;
- 4) had essentially zero electrical bills for three years (just the basic charge, a few dollars a month);
- 5) enjoyed the very excellent feeling that I had finally entered the 21st century by powering a big piece of my lifestyle and business with the sunlight falling right on my roof – the greenest, cleanest, easiest energy ever invented.

PLENTIFUL IN THE PEACE COUNTRY

Solar electric power works well just about anywhere, but especially up here in the Peace Country. In spite of our long, dark, snowy winters that can greatly reduce

the solar power available, our long, bright, sunny summers more than make up for it.

That’s the beauty of grid-tie up here. With solar on your roof, you produce way more power in the spring, summer and fall than you can use, and that excess is stored as a “credit” in the grid. When winter comes, you just use up that credit.

NOT NEW, NOT EXPERIMENTAL, NOT EXPENSIVE

Solar technology is anything but new. I have a solar panel on my home system that is 35 years old. It’s working just fine.

What is new is the plummeting price of solar. The average cost of solar panels fell some 80 percent between 2009 and 2016, and most solar equipment comes with 10 to 25 year guarantees.

Prices were driven down by the economies of scale. Solar has become the fastest growing energy source on the planet, with some one million solar panels installed around the world every two days in 2015, even more last year. Solar growth is exponential, and exceeding all expectations.

Why? Because it makes economic sense now. Even in BC, solar power you generate on your own roof costs about the same as you would pay BC Hydro for power. Plus you are freed from inevitable rate increases, and you have a valuable home or business asset to boot!

The Hudson’s Hope workshop will start with an audio-visual “crash course in grid-tied solar” and then lots of time for questions and answers. There will also be several solar homeowners there who can give first-hand information about solar power in the Peace Country.

Peace Energy Co-op is asking those wishing to attend the Solar Workshop to pre-register by calling 250-782-3882.

See you there!

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