

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING, 2013

peaceenergy.ca

250-782-3882



## Meet our new Executive Director: Fred Feddema

**F**red and wife Jennifer have lived in Dawson Creek for more than 35 years and have three grown children. Fred has been a member of Peace Energy Cooperative since 2006 and served as President of the Board in 2011. Fred feels strongly that renewable energy is the only viable option for long term sustainability.

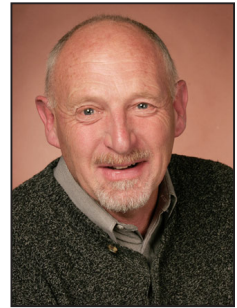


Fred was the general manager for Chances Prince Rupert and a regional manager for the BC Lottery Corporation. He has been involved in many community organizations such as the Rotary Club, Curling Club and Speed Skating Club. Fred has been a member of the Notre Dame School Board and currently serves on the Dawson Creek Library board.

Fred is available to answer questions about Peace Energy Cooperative, or how to become a member. Visit [www.peaceenergy.ca](http://www.peaceenergy.ca) and "contact us" via email, call 250-782-3882, or visit us on Facebook any time.

## Message from the President

**G**reetings members. We haven't updated members since we changed our Executive Director when we said goodbye to Brigitte and hello to Fred. Because of the many new directions we are exploring, we intend to increase our communication with our membership, so newsletters like this one should be coming your way at least three times per year.



The past few months have seen changes here at the office with several new and exciting projects in the works that have kept staff, board members and committee members very busy. We will be moving the office again in the near future back to the ground floor of Peace Photographics. We will explain some of the details in the upcoming 10th AGM on May 11th. By the time you read this all members should have been notified of the AGM.

We have some new projects on the go and some we will have to let go of. I and others will be presenting full reports at the AGM on all that has happened since last year's AGM. For those who can't join us we will be posting to the web site any appropriate information as well as emailing to members things relevant to the membership.

I urge you to come to the AGM and find out what your Peace Energy Coop has been doing on your behalf. There will be announcements of new projects, the election of new board members, and opportunity for input to guide your board of directors into the new year ... plus door prizes and refreshments.

So, I hope to see you there Saturday, May 11, 9:00 am at the Dawson Creek Curling rink.

Rupert Kirk, President

## PLEASE ATTEND OUR UPCOMING AGM!

*Help vote in new directors – exciting coop  
announcements – door prizes and refreshments*

**Saturday, May 11, 2013**

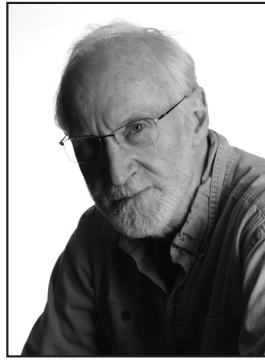
**Upstairs at the Dawson Creek Curling Rink**

**Registration: 9:00 am**

Questions? call 250-782-3882

## New RE blog launched

Peace Energy has launched a renewable energy blog on their web site called *Watt's Happening?* It is also being printed each week in the Dawson Creek Daily News, the Alaska Highway News, the NorthEast News, and several websites including "Friends of Wind."



"There are endless misconceptions and popular myths about renewable energy that I feel compelled to address, so 'myth busting' is first on the agenda," explains author of the blog and member of the board Don Pettit.

*Watt's Happening?* will tackle many controversial issues concerning renewable energy, and give some perspective on where it is heading-globally. It will answer questions like:

- ***Can we power the world with renewables?***
- ***Do electric cars make sense?***
- ***Where does the power from a wind farm go?***
- ***Are wind turbines good or bad for birds?***

Director Joanne Dueck is helping to generate some internet buzz by placing the blog on the Peace Energy Facebook page, and editing comments. "It's exciting! A good bit of conversation has already started," reports Joanne.

Don is one of the founding members of Peace Energy Cooperative, and is a published author and photographer. He has resided in the South Peace Region for almost 40 years. He lives with his partner Barbara Swail in a solar powered home near Dawson Creek.

A new blog article will be posted each week, and back-issues will be on the Peace Energy web site ready to read any time. Check it out at [peaceenergy.ca/watts-happening](http://peaceenergy.ca/watts-happening).

## Q. – What is "Grid-Tie"?

If you set up your own photovoltaic (PV) power system, you can feed the power you generate into the grid. This is called "Grid-Tie."

Grid-tie has many advantages. The new smart meters are "renewable energy ready" because they measure power in two directions, measuring how much electricity you draw from the grid, and also how much you put in. You are charged only for the difference, and if at the end of the year you have put more into the system than you have taken out, you are paid for that amount of electricity. You are also paid MORE for the watt-hours you put in than you are charged for the watt-hours you take out. Sweet.

The grid also acts like your own personal battery system: when the sun is shining you can store excess power in the grid, and then take it out later when you need it.

This is ideal at our latitude, since we have so much sun in the summer and so little in the winter. Using the grid as your battery you can put excess summer solar power into the grid to be withdrawn in the winter.

With proper sizing of your solar power system, you can not only completely eliminate your electricity bill, but also make money by putting more power into the grid than you need.

(Home-sized wind generators can be also be grid-tied. Combined with solar, this can make an ideal Peace Country independent power system since we have both good sun and good wind).

BC Hydro has greatly streamlined the grid-tie application process, and no special equipment is needed. PEC will help you set up your grid-tie system, and now, even sell you the equipment at excellent prices. See the next page for more details!

**QUICK FACT:** *over two million Australians and one million Europeans now generate their own grid-tied power with solar panels on their roofs, and the numbers are growing fast. Canada? Ontario is leading, other provinces are trying to catch up, but overall Canada is lagging behind.*

## Renewable energy equipment now available from your cooperative!

**P**ease Energy Cooperative has partnered with electrical wholesalers E.B. Horseman to sell photovoltaic panels, solar hot water heaters, grid-tie inverters, and much more. Members will receive discounts on purchases.

"Prices for all renewable energy equipment continues to fall as these clean energy technologies enter the mainstream around the world," explains PEC president Rupert Kirk. "Solar power and solar hot water now make real economic sense for homeowners. We think it is a good time for your cooperative to enter the market and begin selling equipment. This will provide income for the coop and best pricing on equipment for members."

The price for solar power panels (called photovoltaic or PV panels) for generating your own electricity, has fallen dramatically over the last few years as the Chinese have moved aggressively into the solar market. PV panel prices are

approaching \$1.00 per watt, a remarkable breakthrough, and quality is excellent.

"When I built my home system 20 years ago," says coop director Don Pettit, "my PV panels cost \$650 each. Now the same or better panel costs \$150. Amazing!"

Besides offering price discounts to members, PEC will also be doing bulk orders for best pricing, as well as doing the research to find best suppliers, best warranties and best quality.

"We have also partnered with Northern Lights College, who is training solar hot water and PV installers," say Kirk. "That means we can recommend qualified local installers to our customers."

PEC will officially begin taking orders at the end of May, after the web site is upgraded to include equipment and purchasing information. Watch for further announcements!



*The price for PV panels has fallen dramatically in the last few years. Making your own power for home or business has never been cheaper! PEC will soon be selling PV panels, solar hot water heaters and other RE equipment into the retail market, and will be offering bulk pricing and discounts to members.*

# Cooperatives: not business as usual

*Watt's Happening? #9* by Don Pettit

I push my cart down the aisle and pick up a few groceries, then grab a coffee and say howdy to a few familiar faces. On the way out I stop at the gas bar, fill my tank and buy a magazine. Then its across the street to Lake View Credit Union to pay a few bills and pick up some cash. When I get home I go on-line to the Peace Energy web site to read the latest renewable energy news and browse some cool stuff about good deals on solar panels.

Just going about my day-to-day affairs. But each stop was actually a revolutionary act and a political and economic statement: I have just had the cooperative experience.

The Dawson Coop Union is a food cooperative, credit unions are financial cooperatives, and Peace Energy Coop is a hybrid purchasing / investing cooperative. There are also worker cooperatives where the employees own and democratically govern their own businesses, and there are producer cooperatives, where farmers and others band together to market their products.

And on and on . . . a zillion varieties, so seamlessly woven into our world that they are virtually invisible, yet representing a profound and fundamental shift in the way the world is doing business.

Coops are profit making entities, but they are not profit maximizing. It's a model designed to serve customers, not take as much profit from them as possible. It does not funnel wealth up to the top, but rather distributes it to those at the bottom. Cooperatives are intensely democratic, governing from the bottom up, not from the top down: each member has one and only one vote, period. Coops are designed and committed to serve not just their members but also their communities, and often have a clear commitment to the environment and principles like "fair trade."

Even though it has grown side-by-side with the corporate economy for some two hundred

years, few people realize the size and scope of this distinctly different economic model. In the United States, more than 130 million people are members of a coop or credit union, more than Americans holding shares in the stock market. Worldwide, cooperatives have close to a billion members, and about three billion people use products or receive services from cooperatives. The U.S. is home to some 30,000 cooperatives that provide 2 million jobs, \$75 billion in wages and benefits, and \$500 billion in annual revenue. Total revenue for cooperatives worldwide approaches \$2 trillion. These diverse enterprises, if grouped together into a single nation, would be the 9th largest in the world.

And it's growing. Why? Cooperatives are more resilient in crisis. While banks foundered, credit unions faired relatively well during the 2008 financial collapse because they had handed out fewer toxic mortgages that required fewer bailouts, and had half the number of delinquent loans. Millions have flocked to credit unions since.

Many people are also disillusioned with our corporate-dominated world, marked by ridiculous wealth inequity and careless environmental destruction. It is becoming clear to many that the corporate model has reached both its environmental and financial limits: it is eating itself, while alienating and disempowering the very consumers it relies on for its profits, and destroying the very planet it relies on for all of its wealth. When labour and land, people and the earth itself become mere commodities to be bought and sold, used and destroyed at will, something is dreadfully wrong.

The cooperative model restores control of land, capital, labour and the environment to the community, where it used to be not that long ago. It will continue to grow, from the grass roots up, not from the top down. Cooperatives will help us make the critical transition to a saner world where people, their communities, and the environment on which they depend are important once again.

It's about time.

## Connect with us on Facebook!

Peace Energy director Joanne Dueck has volunteered to set up and maintain our new Facebook page.

Here's the link: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Peace-Energy-A-Renewable-Energy-Cooperative/169121919893246?ref=hl>

Or look for "Peace Energy - A Renewable Cooperative" and "like" our page.

Joanne is posting links to our new "Watt's Happening?" blog by Don Pettit, as well as links to articles related to renewable energy and technology from around the world. Joanne is picking information that is appropriate for our Peace Country context.

We're also hoping to answer your questions and share information about some of the new solar photovoltaic and thermal technologies available through the Cooperative. As well, as a Peace Energy Facebook friend you will be the first to hear announcements about anything new happening with your cooperative. We hope to see you there soon!

**QUICK FACT:** Estonia has become the first country to complete a nationwide network of electric vehicle plug-in stations, with the goal of accelerating EV adoption and reducing carbon pollution. Estonia can do it, why not us?



Many members came to visit and talk energy with their board, who took turns managing the PEC display at the Dawson Creek Trade Show in April. Lots of interest and many questions, especially

about the new ultra-low prices on PV panels. Left to right are: member Roy Mumby and directors Trevor Reeves and Joanne Dueck.