

2004/44 (a)

BACKGROUND

PAY-AS-YOU-GO SMART METERING PROJECT

The Pay-As-You-Go Smart Metering Project is a pilot project jointly funded by the Government of Canada (through Natural Resources Canada), ATCO Electric Ltd. and InfoEnergy Inc.

The goal of the project is to determine if smart metering technology, which tracks energy consumption, will allow utility customers to better manage their energy use. In a previous project in Woodstock, Ontario, households reportedly saved about 15 percent in electricity costs compared with homes using traditional billing methods.

Since residential electricity consumption represents a significant percentage of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, a wide-scale pay-as-you-go system could reduce emissions substantially.

Eligibility

ATCO Electric residential customers who live within the municipal boundaries of Drumheller and Grande Prairie are eligible to participate. The pilot requires volunteers who live in a single-family detached home, with normal residential service of 120/240 volts, and who have owned the home for the previous 12 months. ATCO Electric will need to compare the volunteers' current electricity usage with their usage the previous year.

Participants in the Alberta pilot project will receive their electricity at regulated rates from Direct Energy Regulated Services. On May 4, 2004, this business unit of Direct Energy Marketing Limited took over the responsibility of providing and billing for the regulated-rate electricity used by customers in the ATCO Electric service territory.

Residential customers who meet the criteria and would like more information about participating can call ATCO Electric in Drumheller at (403) 823-1471, and (780) 831-3027 in Grande Prairie.

The Partners

ATCO Electric Ltd., part of the ATCO Group of companies, serves more than 200,000 electric customers in northern and east-central Alberta as well as parts of the Northwest Territories and Yukon. ATCO Electric Ltd. will coordinate the technical portion of this project — assessing and installing smart metering equipment and tools, securing customer participation and involvement, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

InfoEnergy Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Woodstock Hydro Holdings Inc., a utility owned by the City of Woodstock. It was created to promote pay-as-you-go and advanced smart metering systems, and sell the meters, software and expertise to implement these systems.

Natural Resources Canada plays a leading role in helping improve the quality of life of Canadians through sustainable resource development. Its Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE), will support the implementation of this project by providing funding and information material for participants. The OEE will also monitor the results of the project.

For more information, media may contact:

Cathy Worden
Office of the Minister
Natural Resources Canada
Ottawa
(613) 996-2007

Ghyslaine Charron
Media Relations
Natural Resources Canada
Ottawa
(613) 992-4447

Dick Walthall
President
ATCO Electric Ltd.
Edmonton
(780) 420-7950

Carl Kelly
Business Development Manager
InfoEnergy Inc.
(519) 537-0110, ext. 280
or 1-888-229-2290, ext. 280