

Unique Community a Model for a Greener, Healthier Canada

OKOTOKS, ALBERTA – The Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources, marked the grand opening of the Drake Landing Solar Community today along with representatives of many of the partners involved in the first-of-its-kind project.

The Drake Landing Solar Community, a new residential development in Okotoks, just south of Calgary, is home to 52 solar-heated residences built within the larger master-planned community. Greenhouse gas emissions from each home in the solar enclave are less than half those of an average home, thanks to an innovative renewable-energy system, energy-efficient building techniques and other technologies.

"The Drake Landing Solar Community demonstrates the value of investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency – the very things we are doing with our ecoENERGY initiatives. That is why we are pleased that our government contributed \$2 million to this community," said Minister Lunn. "It shows what is possible when governments, industry and communities share a commitment to a vision for a cleaner, greener, healthier Canada."

Other partners speaking at the event included Simon Knight, on behalf of the Government of Alberta and Climate Change Central; Bill McAlpine, Mayor of Okotoks; Ken Lezniak of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; Bill Bobyk of Sterling Homes; Vicky J. Sharpe, President & CEO, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) and Brendan Dolan, representing ATCO Gas.

"The Drake Landing Solar Community demonstrates the potential for storing the sun's energy and using it to heat our homes. We're hoping this is the first of many communities plugging into the potential of renewable energy," said Simon Knight, President and CEO of Climate Change Central, a public-private partnership that provided seed funding for this project. "I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by the Government of Alberta to this world-class demonstration."

"As a leader in sustainable development, the Town of Okotoks is making broad and comprehensive choices that recognize a strong reciprocal relationship between the environment and community development," said Bill McAlpine, Mayor of Okotoks. "The Drake Landing Solar Community is an impressive illustration of how business and various levels of government can join together for the benefit of communities."

Up to 90 percent of the space heating needs of the 52 homes in the neighbourhood are met by a solar-heated district heating system. It is North America's first large-scale seasonal storage solar system, and the first in the world to deliver such a high percentage of space heating from solar energy.

Speaking on behalf of the builder, Sterling Homes, Bill Bobyk, General Manager of the Sterling Group of Companies, stated, "At Sterling Homes, the belief which drives our business is 'doing the right thing.' We believed Drake Landing Solar Community was doing what's right, and Sterling Homes,

along with our many partners, are proud to have contributed to the success of this innovative community."

The Drake Landing Solar Community has also been honoured with several awards, including the Emerald Award for Climate Change from the Alberta Emerald Foundation and the Gold Award from the International Awards for Liveable Communities program, endorsed by the United Nations Environment Program. Demand for the homes was very high, and all 52 sold quickly with the last occupancy slated for October.

In addition to the Government of Canada's \$2-million financial contribution to Drake Landing, numerous partners contributed another \$5 million to the project. Among the project partners are: the Province of Alberta, Sustainable Development Technology Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Funds, United Communities, Sterling Homes, ATCO Gas, the Town of Okotoks, Climate Change Central, SAIC Canada, IFTech International, Enermodal Engineering Ltd., Bodycote Materials Testing Canada Inc., Thermal Energy System Specialists, EnerWorks Inc., Nu-Air Ventilation Systems Inc., Sunbow Consulting Ltd., Hurst Construction Management Inc., Howell-Mayhew Engineering Inc., the Drake Landing Steering Committee from Chalmers University (Sweden), the Bavarian Centre of Applied Energy Research (Germany), the University of Calgary, Queens University and Environment Canada.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

The Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of Natural Resources, attended the grand opening today of the Drake Landing Solar Community in Okotoks, Alberta. Minister Lunn was joined by representatives of many of the partners involved in the first-of-its-kind project. The Drake Landing Solar Community is home to 52 solar-heated residences built within the larger master-planned community.

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The following media backgrounder is available at www.nrca.gc.ca/media:

- a. [Drake Landing Solar Community](#)

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