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# News Release

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## Alberta Solar-Heating Project First in North America



CALGARY — Capturing the sun's rays in the summer to heat homes in the winter will soon be a reality in a neighbourhood in Alberta. Today, Senator Tommy Banks, on behalf of the Honourable R. John Efford, Minister of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), and the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of the Environment, announced a collaboration to build and operate North America's first large-scale solar-heating system using seasonal storage. The partners are the governments of Canada and Alberta, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) through the Green Municipal Funds, and a number of Canadian companies.



"This system significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrates the importance of using clean, renewable energy sources," said Senator Banks. "It's exciting to see a project of this size being realized that will have environmental benefits for the community of Okotoks and will also set an example across North America."

"The Government of Alberta takes pride in advancing improvements to existing technologies, as well as seeking innovative approaches to meet the ongoing energy needs of all Albertans," said the Honourable Victor Doerksen, Alberta Minister of Innovation and Science. "The new Drake Landing subdivision in Okotoks is an example of the type of innovation being supported in our province as we look for ways to better use all of our natural resources."

"The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is pleased to support this project through the Green Municipal Funds," said City of Calgary Alderman Joe Ceci, representing the FCM. "It will lay out an important road map with lessons learned for other communities across the country that want to replicate Okotoks' experience in the future."

The system will supply more than 90 percent of the space-heating requirements for the Drake Landing Solar Community of 52 homes being built in Okotoks, just south of Calgary. The demonstration project will collect the sun's energy through solar panels mounted on garage roofs and then transfer it to underground storage. The storage temperature increases over the summer and then, during the winter season, the thermal energy is retrieved and distributed through a central district heating system to homes in



the community. This project is supported by many organizations including United Communities, Sterling Homes, ATCO Gas, the Town of Okotoks, Climate Change Central and EnerWorks.

Approximately 80 percent of residential greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada come from space and domestic hot-water heating. This project is estimated to reduce GHG emissions for each house by 5 tonnes per year. That translates into 260 tonnes per year for the community.

The Government of Canada's Technology Early Action Measures program and NRCan have contributed \$2 million to this project. Through the Green Municipal Funds, the FCM has invested \$2.9 million. The Government of Alberta has provided \$625,000 in funding through its Innovation Program.

The Drake Landing Solar Community project enhances our quality of life by contributing to knowledge, innovation and technology in the natural resources sectors, which are a vital part of Canada's economy and society. It also supports the Government of Canada's commitment to building on the strength of our country and our people.

A media backgrounder with more information on the project can be found at [www.nrcan.gc.ca/media](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/media).

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FOR BROADCAST USE:

A neighbourhood in Alberta will soon be able to capture the sun's rays in the summer to heat homes in the winter. Today, the governments of Canada and Alberta and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, together with a number of Canadian companies, launched a large-scale solar-heating project that will be the first of its kind in North America.

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