

GET DAWSON CREEK GREEN!



*Information, resources, and
documentation
from the
Get Dawson Creek Green
Job Creation Project
Website and Blog.*

September 2009 to July 2010



Compiled by L Studley for Hill Computing Inc. June 2010



Funded in whole or in part by the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement

Table of Contents

Contents

Our Objectives	1
Our Sponsors	2
Alternative Energy	5
Articles and Newspaper Columns	11
Blog Transcripts	16
Links	26
Resources	29
Alternate Energy Business Directory	29



Our Objectives

Project Objectives:

The primary objective of the project was to provide participants with work experience in the field of alternative energy and to provide them with opportunities to gain skill in research, computer applications, public speaking, team building and networking

Sub Objectives:

1. Show homes and businesses how to reduce waste, water usage, heat loss and power consumption by providing free personalized strategy sheets and installing green tools.
2. Provide a local online green business directory and quarterly newsletter as well as a resource centre office at City Hall.
3. Create a database and document the results on a new website.
4. Video progress for release on YouTube and create downloadable PDFs to show how our office becomes paperless.
5. Prepare and present three workshops for the general public on sustainable energy topics.

Our Sponsors

The Get Dawson Creek Green Job Creation Program was funded by the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. We also received assistance from Encana, the City of Dawson Creek, and the Northern Environmental Action Team. During the program we received assistance and support from many organizations, businesses and individuals. The following is as accurate a list as can be gathered. We apologise if anyone has been left off. Please know it was not done deliberately.

- [Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre](#)
- [Canada Safeway](#)
- [Tim Hortons](#)
- [Dawson Co-op](#)
- [Linda Connell Studley](#)
- [Extra Foods](#)
- [Butcher Block](#)
- Brass Scissors
- [North East News](#)
- [CJDC TV](#)
- [CJDC 890AM](#)
- Dawson Creek Daily News / The Mirror
- [Epscan Industries Ltd](#)
- [Boston Pizza](#)
- [Corlane Sporting Goods Ltd.](#)
- In Touch Massage
- [Northern Toy Box](#)
- Read's Books
- [Cafe Europa](#)
- [Shoppers Drug Mart](#)
- [Software Emporium](#)
- Wildcat Video
- [BP Canada](#)
- [Days Inn](#)
- Signs and Things
- Nawican Friendship Centre
- Under the Willow
- Bing's Furniture

Saving Energy (Taken from the website)

Saving energy is a new way of life. If we all choose to follow a few easy measures we can make a huge difference to the planet. On the one hand we conserve our non-renewable natural resources but the bottom line is we can save money. Here are some easy changes you can do at home at work and even driving.

Water Saving Tips:

- Install low flow or dual flush toilets.
- Install a high efficiency shower head to save up to 750 gallons a month.
- Fix leaking taps and toilets and save 300 gallons of water or more a month.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save 25 gallons a month.
- Never water your lawn during peak hours (8am - 5pm) or you will lose water through evaporation. Early in the morning and during the evening is best.
- Collect rainwater for your lawn and plants.
- Toilets can leak from the tank without you noticing. One way to find out is by putting some food coloring in the tank, if it runs into the bowl within a minute you have a leak. Flush your toilet after a minute.
- Always wait until you have a full load of clothes and wash in cold water. It not only saves you water and money, but your clothes' colours as well.
- Dishwashers have many features that waste money and water. Use NORMAL settings without steam, don't wash half loads, and don't overload.
- A 10 minute shower with a regular flow shower head can fill 3 bathtubs, keep your showers short.
- Don't use the toilet as a trash can.

Gas Saving Tips:

Natural Gas or LPG (Propane) Forced Air Furnace

- Keep your furnace clean, lubricated, and properly adjusted with annual maintenance.
- Clean or replace the air filter every 1-2 months - a dirty filter reduces the airflow and forces the furnace to run longer to heat your home.
- Consider purchasing a new ENERGY STAR® qualified furnace with a variable speed motor. Change from a 60% to 95% efficient gas furnace. You could save \$571.00/year in Gas and Electrical costs.
- Consider a yearly inspection by a qualified gas fitter. You can gain more efficiency by adjusting the fuel/air ratios and replacing worn elements in the furnace.
- Lower your thermostat by 4 - 5 degrees Celsius (7 - 9 degrees Fahrenheit) while you're sleeping at night or when no one is at home.
- Save up to \$71 a year by installing a programmable thermostat to turn down the heat when you don't need it. You can save 2% on your heating bill for every 1 degree C you turn down your thermostat.

Natural Gas or LPG (Propane) Hot Water Boilers

- If you have wall mount radiant heaters, keep the radiant surfaces clean and free of dust. Be cautious when cleaning the aluminium fin styles as they are easily bent.
- In or under floor radiant tubing is generally trouble free.
- In boiler systems, a yearly check of the heat transfer medium (water or water glycol mix) for PH and glycol efficacy (hydrometer test) will promote efficient energy (heat) transfer.
- PH control is important for your metallic heat medium supply tubing and heat exchangers as high acid will tend to shorten the service life of your equipment, check your PH.
- Save up to \$71 a year by installing a programmable thermostat to turn down the heat when you don't need it. You can save 2% on your heating bill for every 1 degree C you turn down your thermostat.

Driving Tips

- Keep your air filters clean.
- If you see the lights ahead are red, take your foot off the throttle immediately. If you wait and then use your brakes you are simply wasting the fuel you used to achieve a speed you didn't need.
- Don't speed. Drive to the speed limit.
- Friction is your enemy! Consider a friction reduction compound for your motor and other moving parts. A 10% increase in fuel economy could be realized.
- Don't leave your vehicle idling for prolonged periods of time.

Electricity Saving Tips

- Change incandescent bulbs to more energy efficient compact fluorescent bulbs. They save up to 30% of the energy of an ordinary bulb and last up to 15 times longer.
- If you have an electric water heater, use cold water when washing clothes
- Hang your clothes to dry outside whenever possible and reduce the energy used by your dryer by up to 100%.
- Install a programmable thermostat and save 10% on your heating bill by having the heat turned down when you're sleeping or not at home.
- Keep windows and doors shut when using heaters and air conditioners.
- Turn off lights when they're not needed. Use natural light when ever possible.
- Turn off computers when not in use and/or use power management settings instead of screen savers.
- Turn off electronic devices like printers/scanners and TVs when not in use.
- Invest in "smart" power bars that cut off the phantom drain of energy that appliances and electronics use when turned off, but left plugged in.

- Purchase ENERGY STAR® Qualified Products when buying new electronics and appliances.

Alternative Energy (Taken from the website)

Our lifestyles depend on energy being present at all times. We all know that the creation of energy generally means there will be environmental implications. Now is the time to promote and implement the use of energy sources which do not negatively affect the planet. Do your part. Educate yourself. Reduce your environmental footprint. Remember, "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Solar Energy

The energy from sunlight can be used for electricity to power electronics and homes, to heat water, cook food, even to heat and cool houses. Solar Energy comes in two forms: active, and passive. **Active** solar energy is when solar energy is converted using solar cells, pumps or fans. **Passive** solar is used in such forms as heat sinks, or merely letting the sun heat your home. Solar energy powers homes through the use of solar or photo-voltaic cells, which converts sunlight into Direct Current (DC) electricity, you then need an inverter to convert the DC to Alternating Current (AC) for home use.

Solar water heaters work by running tubes of fluid outside your house into thermal collectors, which heat the fluid, which is then pumped back into the house via an electric pump.

Some solar solutions need to be considered before the building is constructed. Placing your main rooms on the south facing side of your house or installing large stone or concrete heat sinks indoors that retain the heat in winter and stay cool in the summer require advance planning. But many solar systems can start small, relieving some of the burden of the electrical load, and be added to gradually.

Pros:

- Clean energy source.
- Long life expectancy of panels.
- Return on investment.
- Can start small and add to system
- It's possible to "learn as you go."
- The energy of the sun is abundant and free.
- Low maintenance costs.

Cons:

- Can be expensive.
- Larger installations may require a lot of space.
- Requires specialized installation.

Wind Energy

Mankind has been harnessing the wind since ancient Egypt, from sailing the high seas to grinding grain. This source of energy is 100% clean and it's free.

Wind is created by the heat from our sun. Because the surface of our planet is uneven it is heated at different intervals due to time and altitude. Once the heat hits the ground it is deflected back up and warms the cold air causing it to rise. When air rises it draws more air in to fill its place causing wind.

Wind turbines harness the moving air, by using it to move giant propeller blades. The blades spin turning a shaft inside an electric generator creating clean electricity. Unlike fossil fuel, which is running out, the wind has an endless supply. Unfortunately wind power can be unpredictable, it doesn't blow all the time, but most turbines have been placed where they produce energy 70-80% of the time. Turbines also range in design so use of the wind is optimal. The Bear Mountain turbines near Dawson Creek reach up 78 meters high and that's not including the length of the blades.

Pros:

- Renewable
- Return on investment
- Very clean energy source
- Energy made can be used right away or it can be stored
- Can be done anywhere there is wind
- Reliable energy source, has been in use for a long time

Cons:

- Requires a location with consistent wind
- Initial investment
- May require professional installation depending on size

Geo Thermal Energy

Geothermal comes from both stored sunlight within the earth, and the radiant heat from the Earth's core. The earth remains the same temperature underneath the frost line. In order to utilize this steady supply of heat, measures must be taken to dissipate it safely.

It starts in the ground, a series of pipes are placed into the earth and their depth depends on the location of the home and the depth of the frost line. Fluid is circulated within the pipes so the heat can be transferred from the ground to the fluid, once the solution has travelled the circuit it returns to the house so that the heat can be

dispersed throughout. Depending on how the system will be used, a geothermal system may be compatible with the home's existing heating arrangement. Because the heat in the Earth never changes geothermal can work wonders during the harshest winter and magic in the summer. During the winter the house is kept warm and the procedure can be reversed in the hot months to dispel the heat from within the home back into the ground.

Pros:

- Very clean, reliable energy source
- Renewable
- Return on investment
- Government grants are available from Natural Resources Canada
- Cuts household emissions by 50%
- Free hot water

Cons:

- Installation may require large area or deep drilling
- Expensive to install
- Requires professional installation

Time Line

October

- Presentation from Sally Emory of the Northern Environmental Action Team (NEAT)
- Initial outreach forms designed
- Residential outreach visits started
- Alternative business database completed
- YouTube Videos #1 & 2 created and uploaded
- Get Us Green website functional (www.getusgreen.org)
- Eco Office set up and operational at City Hall



November

- Presentation from Sally Emory of the Northern Environmental Action Team (NEAT)
- Presentation from Alvin Stedel
- Fillable form in adobe pro completed
- Outreach database completed
- Green shopping event
- Get Us Green Blog started (see transcripts for dates/entries)
- Place at the table presentation and table
- YouTube Videos #3, 4, & 5 created and uploaded
- Vermiculture program started



December

- Started business outreach visits
- E-newsletter #1 completed
- Presentation of project to city council
- Get Us Green website completed
- NPO Resource Society initial planning completed
- YouTube Videos #6 created and uploaded
- Dawson Creek Community Garden Society website completed
- New Horizons grant approved for DC Community Gardens
- Get Us Green column published in North East News – “Home Energy Savings Tips from Get Dawson Creek Green”



January

- Presentation from Peace Country Geothermal
- Native housing outreach visits
- Rotary club presentation
- NPO Resource Society incorporation
- YouTube Videos #7 & 8 created and uploaded
- Northern Lights College Foundation Award for DC Community Gardens
- Lake View Credit Union grant to DC Community Gardens to refurbish compost center
- Dawson Creek Daily News article published
- Get Us Green column published in North East News – “Five Little Tips That Can Make A Big Difference in Going Green”
- Passed Eco Office on to NEAT



February

- DCCGS website 2 completed
- Get Us Green column published in North East News – “Tricks to a Healthy Furnace”

March

- Presentation from Puma Power
- Visit to Puma Power facility
- “Sunsational Solutions” – Alternate Energy Event
- Information table set up at Pacific Institute for Climate Change event
- Northern Properties outreach visits
- Outreach information table at malls
- Chamber of Commerce luncheon presentation
- E-newsletter # 2 completed
- Youtube video # 9 created and uploaded
- City Grant Program Approved-dccgs
- Get Us Green column published in North East News – “The Basics to Dodging Draft Issues Throughout Your Home”
- Get Us Green column published in Dawson Creek Daily News – “Saving Water in the Bathroom”(unfortunately the title didn’t match the column which was about phantom power)
- Decision not to pursue NPORS due to funding restraints



April

- Information Booth at Dawson Creek Kiwanis Trade Show
- Information Booth at Dawson Creek Rod and Gun Club Gun Show
- Presentation to Fort St John Oilmen Association
- Created handbook for Dawson Creek Community Garden Society website
- Compost Center work completed
- Work started on new "Trail Side Community Garden"
- North East News article on Sunsational Solutions Event



May

- Information table at Seniors Hall for Dawson Creek Community Garden Society
- Seniors Tea at DC Public Library- presentation for Dawson Creek Community Garden Society
- Completed all outreach visits
- E-newsletter #3 completed
- Get Us Green website revamp completed
- Press release article3 published

June

- Phone survey Completed
- Presentation at Books in Bloom at DC Public Library for DC Community Garden Society
- Completed new "Trail Side Community Garden" site
- E-newsletter #3 published
- Call backs to outreach clients completed
- Participants start leaving program for other jobs



July

- Get Us Green website simplified into static site
- Compiled information disseminated to partners

Articles and Newspaper Columns

Several articles were published in local newspapers by local journalists. As well, the Marketing Department provided two newspapers with a steady stream of columns on energy efficiency and alternate energy topics. Not all of the columns were published but many were. Those that did not appear in the newspapers were posted as entries on the website's blog.

Northeast NEWS December 24 & 31, 2009 Page 17

Home energy saving tips from Get Dawson Creek Green

Homes work as a system and although fogged up windows may just seem to be a nuisance, they might also mean that your home system needs some attention.

If your windows are older, or single pane, you may want to consider replacing them with more energy efficient, sealed windows. If condensation occurs between sealed panes, the seal is broken. Broken seals are not repairable and the window will need to be replaced. Condensation is generally an indication of high humidity in your home. Cooking, bathing, long showers, and drying clothes can all increase humidity.

Ways to control the humidity in your home:

- Make sure stove fans, bathroom fans, and clothes dryers vent outside
- Avoid hanging clothes to dry inside your home
- Ensure that your furnace has an outside air intake

If you have a higher efficiency furnace, make sure a fresh air intake was installed

The colder it is outside, the drier you may need to keep the inside air your home.

Get Dawson Creek Green is a community initiative offering free energy efficiency assessments for homes or businesses in Dawson Creek. If your home or business is located within Dawson Creek you are eligible to receive a free energy efficiency assessment and a personalized strategy sheet on all the ways you can save energy and money in your home or business.

Just contact Get Dawson Creek Green at (250) 782-5005, info@getusgreen.org, or visit the website at www.getusgreen.org

Get Dawson Creek Green is funded in whole or in part by the Canada-BC Labour Market Development Agreement.

The Northeast News will be running frequent columns from Get Dawson Creek Green on how to go green with topics such as energy efficiency, creating a paperless office, gardening and composting, and alternate energy technologies (solar, wind, geothermal etc.) Though the program is in Dawson Creek, the initiatives can be put in place anywhere.

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DAWSON CREEK

Daily News

SINCE 1930



Resources assistant Scott Simpson works on the Get Dawson Creek Green database Thursday afternoon.

Get down, get green

Get Dawson Creek Green providing free energy audits to Dawson Creek homes

ANDREW BERGLAND
Dawson Creek Daily News

"Free" is a hard word to swallow when even water comes with a price tag but free is exactly what services cost from Get Dawson Creek Green.

"If you get on the phone and offer something free people say 'oh, it's a scam,'" web and marketing manager Linda Studley laughed about the difficulty in spreading the news about the environmentally focused work experience program. "A lot of people say nothing's free, well this is free."

A more accurate statement is it's already been paid for, as Get Dawson Creek Green is federally and provincially government funded. Located in a downtown office that opened in September, Get Dawson Creek Green has recruited 12 employment insurance eligible workers with the goal of creating a greener city.

The group's first line of business is promoting its energy efficiency employees have undergone on-the-job training in order to teach them how to provide energy assessments. Teams of two have since been visiting local homes and businesses to provide information about how energy consumption can be improved and utility bills reduced.

"They will look at windows for drafts, check for leaky taps, look at your furnace, look at the water heater, ventilation system, and you can give them some of you utility bills," Studley said. "They put together a personalized strategy sheet for you, will identify where your problem areas are and will give you a list of various things you can do, ranging from inexpensive things, right up to larger projects. New furnace, or even some alternate energy choice, perhaps."

Studley illustrated the increasing popularity of the assessments by indicating a scheduling calendar filled with appointments, and said people like the hands-on approach to their system.

"What you get is something that is personalized to your home or business, which is very helpful because you'll go out there and find lots of energy tips but they might not relate to you," she said. "So this is a real personalized affair."

Continued on Page A2

ANDREW BERGLAND/DOON
Get Dawson Creek Green's web and marketing manager Linda Studley holds some of the low-flow showerheads they offer to those who get an energy assessment.



DAWSON CREEK DAILY NEWS

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Group looks for non-profit status

Continued from Page A1...

Not only is the program promoting energy use, but also creates opportunities to the individuals involved with the project. Studley said the Get Dawson Creek Green team is gaining skills that will put them on the front lines of the alternative energy industry.

"It's a big industry and it's getting more and more

popular," she said. "Any type of familiarity with that is definitely going to be an edge for anybody in the job market."

The program is scheduled to end in the middle of July, but Get Dawson Green staff are currently working to have the program incorporated into a non-profit resource organization society. The purpose will be to assist and support the large number of

area charitable organizations.

More information on Get Dawson Creek Green or to book a home assessment can be found at getdawsongreen.org. As part of their training, staff are also engaging the community through social media; operating a Facebook page and creating YouTube videos. Get Dawson Creek Green can also be reached at 250-782-5905.

GET DAWSON CREEK GREEN Tricks to a healthy furnace

Minor furnace maintenance can result in major savings on your energy bill. Dirty filters constrict the air flow entering your furnace, causing it to burn less efficiently. The location of the filter varies between various makes, models, and years, so refer to the owner's manual or contact the manufacturer for instructions (most furnace manufacturers offer manuals or partial manuals on their websites). Air filters should be checked monthly in the winter, especially if there are pets in the house because the fan draws pet hairs into the filter. Hold your furnace filter up to a light; if the light doesn't shine through clearly it should be replaced or cleaned.

Oil furnaces have an oil intake filter that requires periodic cleaning or changing. Again, you can refer to your owner's manual or contact the manufacturer for location and disassembly instructions. Cleaning the oil intake filter allows the oil to flow more consistently and with less resistance which allows your furnace to run at peak efficiency.

Gas and propane furnaces should be checked professionally (preferably by the original installer) every couple of years. Oil furnaces should be checked professionally every year because oil is a dirtier fuel. Older furnaces may have two motors (burner motor and fan motor). Often one is in the front and the other

is in the back but it could be configured differently in your furnace. There may be oil ports on one or both of the motors and shafts. Oiling these motors will not only save wear and tear on the furnace parts but the motors will not have to draw as much power to overcome additional friction - 10-weight, non-detergent, motor oil (not all purpose) is preferred. Two or three drops in each port every couple of months is all that is necessary.

If your home or business is located within Dawson Creek you are eligible to receive a free energy efficiency assessment and a personalized strategy sheet on all the ways you can save energy and money in your home or business.

Just contact Get Dawson Creek Green at (250) 782-5005, info@getusgreen.org, or visit the website at www.getusgreen.org

Get Dawson Creek Green is funded in whole or in part by the Canada-BC Labour Market Development Agreement.

The basics to dodging draft issues throughout your home

Small drafts sneaking around windows and doors can add up to big bucks sneaking out of your wallet.

A good way to stop heat loss and drafts around older, single pane, wooden framed windows is to apply plastic film. Plastic film is available at your local hardware store and although the price range can be wide, you can rest assured that even lower priced plastic film will do the job. Not sure how to install the plastic? Follow the link on our website under

ing how to install window plastic.

A lot of cold air can leak in through electrical outlets. This problem is easily solved by installing foam gaskets that can also be purchased at your local hardware store. Just remove the faceplate, install the gasket to block the airflow, then replace the plate.

Doors are another area for concern. Warm air can escape and cold air can get in through gaps between the door jam

stalled, again follow the links on our website to Links-Energy Efficiency for video assistance. Even though we're covered in a white blanket of snow we can still Get Green.

If your home or business is located within Dawson Creek you are eligible to receive a free energy efficiency assessment and a personalized strategy sheet on all the ways you can save energy and money in your home or business. Just contact Get Dawson Creek Green at (250) 782-5005, [13](mailto:info@</p>
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Saving water in the bathroom

Get Dawson Creek Green

If you counted the number of occupants in your home that uses electricity you might be leaving one out that uses more power than any other occupant. We call him the phantom and he is taking power from your home 24 hours a day. Phantom power or Phantom loads are created by devices that continue to draw small amounts of power, even when they are in the off or sleep/stand by mode. For example, did you know that monitors, printers, DVD players, televisions, and other electronic devices draw as much as 70% of their total power even when they are in stand by mode or even switched off. Most electrical devices still draw power 24 hours a day, while plugged in, even though you use them for only a couple of hours. One way to fight off the phantom is to have your devices plugged into a power bar so you can turn them off completely when they're not needed. Some power bars come with master plugs that will let you shut some plugs down while others remain on. If you don't like to come home to reset your flashing clock lights every time you turn the power bar on, you could plug them in the master plugs, making sure not to reset important devices. Power bars are available at most home retail or building supply stores.

If your home or business is located within Dawson Creek you are eligible to receive a free energy efficiency assessment and a personalized strategy sheet on all the ways you can save energy and money in your home or business. Just contact Get Dawson Creek Green at 250-782-5005, info@getusgreen.org, or visit the website at www.getusgreen.org

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Northeast NEWS

April 8, 2010 Page A11

Cutting costs the focus of alternative energy workshop in DC

By Matthew Bains

DAWSON CREEK – Finding alternative energy solutions to cut down on energy costs was the theme of the "Sunsational Solutions" workshop in Dawson Creek on March 27.

Michael McFadden, sales manager with G2 Solar made a presentation on the applications of solar thermal hot water systems. He said the advantages over a natural gas-fired tank are a potential reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by tonnes every year and the potential to be self-sufficient in energy used for heating water. He added the payback period, depending on the site and the purpose, is typically between seven to nine years.

"Your natural gas doesn't fire as much if you have that thermal system on there," said McFadden. "Heating water accounts for about 29 per cent of a household's energy consumption."

McFadden said his company also sells wind generators, from one-kilowatt generators used for small shops or cabins to one-megawatt generators for multi-residential, large commercial and industrial purposes. He said the frequency of the wind, not the wind speed, is the biggest factor and added while wind power may not be a feasible option for most homeowners, it can be for businesses and industry.

Marvin Jackson with Sundog Solar and Agriculture Supplies explained the advantages of solar power for electrical purposes. He said new micro-inverter technology allows each solar panel to act independently of each other, which

simplifies wiring and prevents the "Christmas tree light effect," where a problem with one panel could reduce the effectiveness of the whole system. He added up to 400 panels could be installed in a single system.

Jackson said contrary to the common perception, panels do not have to be placed on roofs and in fact ground mounts or the more popular pole mounts can avoid roof leaks and make changing the position of the panels easier.

He said troubleshooting is now easier because of an energy management system that can monitor energy output of each panel in real time within five minutes intervals. He said the modules and micro-inverter will last at least 30 years and if the cost of electricity from traditional sources continues to rise, the cost savings could be significant over time. He added it contributes to the overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

"If everybody in the country had one kilowatt on their house, it would make a significant difference on whether we're building new energy plants such as coal," said Jackson. "I don't say we have to go out there and reduce our power bill to zero, but if everybody does a little bit it will make a huge amount of difference."

Chad Hayward with Peace Country Geothermal was informing people on the benefits of geothermal heating, particularly for homeowners.

"Geothermal as an energy source is an alternative to natural gas or propane," said Hayward. "Operating costs for an average home are typically about one third of the cost of natural gas ... compared to propane, it's about a quarter of the cost."

He added on a new home that payback period would be about seven years.

He said the system also acts as an air-conditioning unit with no extra upgrades needed and it can also be integrated

with hot water systems.

The event also featured exhibits from the Northern Environmental Action Team, Peace Energy Cooperative, Get Dawson Creek Green and more.



Matthew Bains photo
Chad Hayward (left) with Peace Country Geothermal answers some questions posed by Leonard Hebert during the Sunsational Solutions workshop in Dawson Creek on March 27.

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Community Garden Society developing new site for seniors

By Matthew Bains

DAWSON CREEK – The Dawson Creek Community Garden Society is moving to a new site, where they hope to encourage the city's senior citizens to enjoy the outdoors – and each other.

The society received approval on May 3 from city council to develop a new site in the park area adjacent to the old Compost Demonstration Centre along the Dawson Trail walking path.

The group has been approved for a New Horizons for Seniors Program grant through the federal government to build 20 raised garden beds and a chain-link fence to enclose the site. Four of those

beds will be built to be wheelchair accessible. A shaded area will also be constructed for gardeners to relax under.

Garden manager Tamara Supernault said the idea is to provide a place for seniors to enjoy some fresh air and sunshine while socializing with other gardeners.

"I read that 60 per cent of the seniors in homes don't even get visitors, so it would be nice for them to interact with each other and meet new friends," she said.

She added she has already begun to approach care homes in the city about having their residents participate.

Story continued on Page 12

Page 12 May 13, 2010

Northeast NEWS

COMMUNITY GARDEN SOCIETY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10



Matthew Bains photos

(Above) Six raised beds are being constructed next to the Old Compost Demonstration Centre in Dawson Creek and should be ready to be planted at the end of this month. Just across the Dawson Trail, 20 more raised beds are being developed. (Right) Cory Kutschker with Get Dawson Creek Green paints the door of the old compost centre, which will be used to store gardening equipment.



Supernault said the project presents an opportunity to transfer the knowledge of older, more experienced gardeners to younger newcomers. She said teaching more people to grow produce is good for the environment because it reduces the need to truck in produce from elsewhere, and it's done organically, so no harmful chemicals are used.

Get Dawson Creek Green, a job-creation initiative focused on promoting environmental sustainability,

grant also covers the cost of installing a compost toilet, which will be located in an outhouse next to the compost centre. It will contain peat moss that will convert waste into fertilizer that can be used for the gardens.

Studley said vandalism is a concern with the new site and he has considered installing video cameras. He said they hope residents of Spruceland Manor, which overlooks the site, will become gardeners so

they can help report any incidents. While the Community Garden Society will continue to operate two sites, it is not clear for how much longer. "It's been made clear to the Community Garden Society that Northern Lights College is going to eventually require the grounds that the Paul Dampier Garden is situated on," said Studley. "So we're trying to get something developed as an alternative ahead of time." Anyone interested in joining the Society should contact Supernault at (250) 219-3104.

they can help report any incidents.

While the Community Garden Society will continue to operate two sites, it is not clear for how much longer.

"It's been made clear to the Community Garden Society that Northern Lights College is going to eventually require the grounds that the Paul Dampier Garden is situated on," said Studley. "So we're trying to get something developed as an alternative ahead of time."

Anyone interested in joining the Society should contact Supernault at (250) 219-3104.

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May 04, 2010

Phantom Power Drain



If you counted the number of occupants in your home that use electricity you might be leaving one out that uses more power than any other. We call him the phantom and he is taking power from your home 24 hours a day. Phantom power or Phantom loads are created by devices that continue to draw small amounts of power, even when they are in the off or sleep/standby mode. Monitors, printers, DVD players, televisions, and other electronic devices draw as much as 70% of their total power even when they are in standby mode or switched off. Most electrical devices still draw power 24 hour a day while plugged in, even though you use them for only a couple of hours. One way to fight off the phantom is to have your devices plugged into a power bar so you can turn them off completely when they're not needed. Some power bars come with master plugs that will let you shut some plugs down while others remain on. If you don't like to come home to reset your flashing clock lights every time you turn the power bar on, you could plug them in the master plugs, making sure not to reset important devices. Power bar are available at most home retail or building supply stores.

Posted by Get Dawson Creek Green at 11:15 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

How Efficient is Your Furnace?



How efficient is your furnace and why does it matter? Wouldn't you like to know how much money your furnace sends up the chimney? Low efficiency furnaces are 50% efficient; 50 cents out of every dollar goes up the chimney. Mid efficiency furnaces are 78% efficient; 22 cents up the chimney. High efficiency or condensing furnaces are 93% efficient; now we're down to 7 cents up the chimney. Suddenly it makes a lot of sense (cents) to know what kind of furnace you have. Here are some ways to tell.

- Exhaust Stack: If it has a plastic exhaust stack it's a High Efficiency Furnace
- Condensate Pipe: High Efficiency Furnaces also have a condensate pipe to collect excess moisture so it doesn't sit in the furnace.
- Pilot Lights: Low Efficiency Furnaces have them, so do some Mids. High Efficiency don't.
- Electronics: High have the most, Mid have more electronics than Low and less than High, and Low have little to none.

Posted by Get Dawson Creek Green at 11:10 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

GeoThermal Energy

To most people the word geothermal means hot springs or geysers, like in parts of Iceland or Yellowstone Park or, even closer to home, at Liard Hot Springs where water is heated by magma near the surface of the earth. But the earth's heat lies below us everywhere and is a virtually untapped energy reserve of enormous potential with a very short list of drawbacks. Drawbacks include the expense of drilling, rocks losing heat after years of drilling, or potentially triggering earthquakes. The benefits of this energy source include it being a massive resource, emission and pollutant free, capable of producing power 24/7 (unlike solar or wind power). The first geothermal energy plant was started in 1904 at Larderello, Italy and is still in operation today. Geothermal energy is used in more than 20 countries to generate electricity. Locally there are a few homes and businesses using geothermal heating systems, but as of yet Canada does not have an operating geothermal energy power plant (there has been recent renewed interest in the Mount Meagre in the Garibaldi Volcanic Belt right here in British Columbia). To find out about local geothermal resources visit the business directory on our website at www.getusgreen.org or investigate the Geothermal links on our Links page.

Posted by Get Dawson Creek Green at 11:07 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Light Bulbs



What kind of light bulbs do you use: incandescent, compact fluorescent (CFL), or light emitting diode (LED)? What is the difference and why does it matter? Choosing the right bulb can save money and time. CFL bulbs last ten times longer than incandescent bulbs, and LED bulbs last ten times longer than CFLs! The initial cost of CFL and LED bulbs is higher but 15 CFL bulbs, costing approximately \$50, can save up to \$60 dollars in electricity a year, and they last 3 to 5 years. CFL and LED bulbs come in different versions for all needs including: dimmable, 3 way lighting, and outdoor. If you've had problems with CFLs taking time to warm up outside, try LEDs; they work to -40C or halogen bulbs that fit a standard base.

Posted by [Get Dawson Creek Green](#) at 11:03 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

March 30, 2010

Sunsational Event



Hello

I am writing just to let everyone know what a good job was done by all involved it was alot of hard work but our team spirit obviously paid off. I have no doubt the trade the show will be better yet. My opinion

Brian.

Posted by [Brian J](#) at 04:13 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Comments

It was a good event wasn't it? I was especially pleased at how well everyone worked together to get the job done and how many people came and were so interested and attentive to our presenters. Alternate Energy is still a bit of a mystery to many of us and it was nice to have people who knew their stuff ready at hand to answer questions and explain things. I hope some of our presenters will also be present at the Trade Show too.

Posted by: [Linda S](#) | [April 7, 2010 02:56 PM](#)

March 05, 2010

Evolution of a Tree Hugger



I was thinking back on how long I've been involved in environmental organizations and issues and yipes, it was a long look back! From carrying picket signs in the early 70s to watchdog organizations in the 80s to working for environmental organizations in the 90s and now - simply trying to integrate as much environmentally sound thinking into my lifestyle as I can, I have found my 'role' in the environmental movement has evolved over the years. It's very gratifying to see the great interest, enthusiasm, and dedication to the 'Green Movement' in the participants of Get Dawson Creek Green, especially the younger members. I'm beginning to see that perhaps my role is undergoing yet another change - into more of a support and mentorship role. I hope I can rise to this role and if I cannot be in the front lines anymore, perhaps my experience can help someone else who is.

Posted by Get Dawson Creek Green at 11:48 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Earth Hour

Earth Hour started in Sydney Australia in 2007, where 2.2 million homes and businesses shut off lights for an hour to help demand a change in our current climate state. Just in one year from that, this global trend is catching on all over the world. Starting on March 27 at 8:30pm is Earth Hour, where 100s of millions of people around the world shut off lights and other sources of electronics for the hour. This includes homes and businesses to help lower the environmental impact. Why, why is shutting off lights and other electronics for one hour so important to us and our environment. Well simple, Political leaders have not yet negotiated a global deal to help fight climate change. So stand up and join one of the biggest movements our world knows, help demand a change for our future, and our planets future. Planning for Earth Hour can be simple and fun, such as board game night, or a candle light dinner with that some one special. But if your like me an just cant wait to start to make a change, you can have earth hour every hour, every day. Start by hanging clothes instead of using the drier, take public transportation to and from work. We as individual people can make the difference on our planet with steps to help preserve a clean healthy future.

Posted by Darcy K at 10:51 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

February 24, 2010

Portable solar system / Installed R.V. solar system

This blog is dedicated to small portable solar systems and systems installed into or used in conjunction with R.V. s such as holiday trailers and motor homes or used on their own.

Recently I found myself face to face with a small solar system for the first time. Now I've seen the diagrams of what a typical system entails,... and I've read write ups on solar power too. I figured I had a fairly good general knowledge of them and what they could do. Well I was pleasantly surprised to be wrong. I've always had a healthy respect for the electronic world so although I had some clue of how it worked I felt somehow lacking and therefore was more interested in micro hydro or wind turbines. Give me something mechanical over electrical any day!! . This is why I became pleasantly surprised. I saw how simple these systems are to use. Like most things for me I learn best "hands on " ... better than words and diagrams. So this is why I started this blog. I'm thinking hey,.. if I was hesitant perhaps there are others like me.

Please feel free to tell us about your experiences with solar power that is what this blog is for.

The following contains some general knowledge about typical small solar systems.

Tired of listening to your generator or engine running so you can have power?... Read on and learn how to keep the power on and enjoy the quiet of our beautiful Peace River country.

Permanently installed solar power systems.

Your recreational vehicle uses its alternator to keep your auxiliary R.V. batteries charged. However it must be running to do this. By adding a solar panel you can increase your energy storage capacity and regain the peace and quiet you desire.

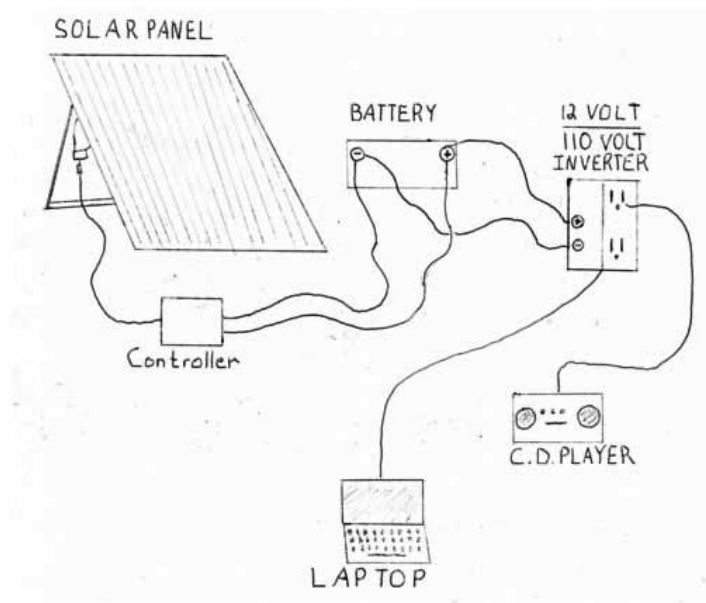
There are good solar packages you can buy for this. They cost about 250 dollars. They come complete with everything you need to fulfill most of your daytime and evening power needs. These systems can be permanently installed by an RV Dealer or a skilled RV owner. With good sunlight for a few hours a day you will be able to use some of the basic small appliances during the night. On a bright sunny day this system can run most everything you need in your R.V. during the day and still have power in the evening. It is important to remember you have to move the unit to face the sun to get optimum power. Limiting the use of any appliance that has a heat coil such as toasters or hot plates is a wise decision as these types of appliances draw too hard on a battery system.

Portable solar power system

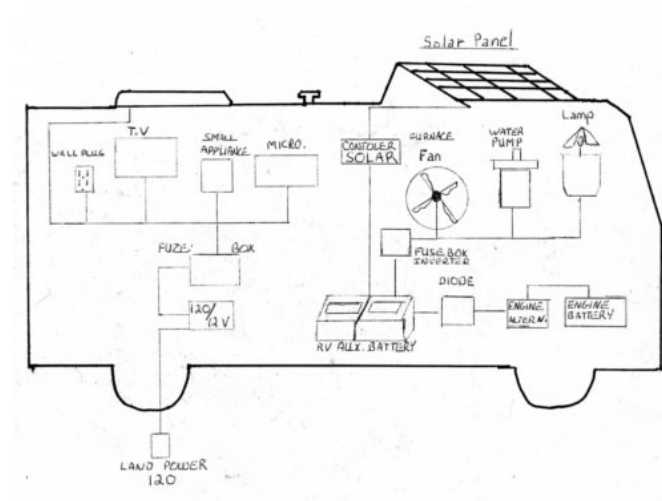
Having your solar system portable is a great option over a permanently rigged system and they cost about the same . The addition of a battery and a power inverter will complete the package. These 2 items will cost about 220 dollars depending on what type of battery you buy. Whether you need 12 volt power for a day fishing using the electric trolling motor, or a radio and lights at night for a camping trip at the lake, these little systems are the ticket. They come complete with everything you need other than the battery to store the power and an inverter. The inverter is optional and just makes your power more adaptable with any plug in device. The addition of a good Gel type Deep Cycle Battery is smart decision but not absolutely necessary. Gel batteries are expensive, (200.00) and are the best. However, the large Caterpillar type batteries and even most 12 volt deep cycle marine batteries are effective too and can be found for less. Even batteries from an electric golf cart will work and are ideal for backpackers.

A Portable Solar set-up.

A Portable Solar set-up.



An RV Solar set-up



Posted by Marcus at 01:55 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Comments

very nice diagrams

Posted by: Anonymous | [February 26, 2010 02:29 PM](#)

February 23, 2010

Get us Green at the gun show

So you are going to the gun show are ya ?.... So are we!

Thats right we will have a table set up with pamphlets, a small solar system, and some custom handmade knives made by Bill Studley. We look forward to answering any questions about Wind Turbines, Solar Power, and Geo - Thermal energy, and even micro hydro power if that interests you. We would be happy to hear from those of you out there who have set up your own systems. As you may know we are also involved with the Dawson Creek Community Garden Society and will have informational brochures from them as well. If you've been pondering these types of changes this is a great opportunity for you to discuss any questions or concerns. Thanks for visiting us and this blog..See ya at the Gun show...April 10 and 11 2010- Dawson Creek.

Regards Marcus

Posted by Marcus at 03:42 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Water Wars

Guess what industry had Americans fork out 4 billion dollars last year? No idea it's something you can get without much money at all so why spend all that money, because company's have convinced us that water from our taps is some how inferior to water that is bottled. People are influenced through advertisements and are lead to believe that the water in the tap is unsanitary and even dangerous to our health. But this is not the case in fact there is no scientific prof that bottled water which is 500 times more expensive is safer to drink. Yet we are sucked into trucking these bottles across the continent and not to mention the empty bottles filling the landfills and these bottles are made with [dangerous chemicals](#) that the water inside absorbs and then we consume.

Another gimmick that have us racing to the stores is that bottled water tastes way better. Countless taste tests shows that this is a lie in fact many testers chose the tap water above the bottled water. So where do you think this magic water comes from the fresh glaciers of Alaska? Water from this place will surely make your taste buds tingle with freshness, wrong again company's use the same water the taps do, slap a label and then carbon emission it straight to you. So will you remain like 1/5 of Canada and only drink bottled water or will you become more buyer beware.

Posted by Tamara S at 01:33 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Comments

Good job Tamara, very informative and well written. The whole world is suffering water shortages even here in Canada. I read recently that lake Superior's water level has been dropping for years. In the show it was startling to see docks ending 25 feet from the waterline! Thats frightening stuff !. Not too mention the water levels in fish bearing streams in B.C.. Its a huge topic that carries alot of weight this misuse of one of the necessaties to life. Regards, Marcus.

Posted by: Marcus M | [February 23, 2010 02:05 PM](#)

December 16, 2009

A Real Tree for Christmas



There's been some discussion in the office about the pros and cons of real and artificial trees so I did some research. What I noticed was a big gap in the options people listed when discussing these pros and cons. Most articles and videos focused on choosing either an artificial tree or purchasing a real, cut tree or using a live tree. There was no mention of cutting a 'wild' tree. On the surface this would seem like a bad idea, after all, shouldn't we leave that tree to grow into a big oxygen producing tree? But unfortunately, like most generalizations, it overlooks some very pertinent facts. Many property owners take the opportunity to thin evergreens that are growing too closely together. This improves the surviving tree's chances of growing stronger, taller and longer. Sometimes evergreens will grow up too close to fence lines or underneath power lines. These trees would end up having to be taken down anyway, so using the tree as a Christmas tree would actually be a sensible option. There is often much controversy over Christmas trees ending up in landfill sites, but this can be avoided through competent municipal planning; making tree pick up and chipping services available.

What kind of tree will you put up this year?

Posted by Get Dawson Creek Green at 04:16 PM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

Comments

I have recently learned that all plastics release lots of chemicals into the air we breath. I am well into the age of being stubborn and I firmly believe that the real tree signifies it's Christmas.

Posted by: Tamara | [December 17, 2009 11:24 AM](#)

Real or Not real that is the question.
Not real 1 beautiful
2 last forever
3 will not burn
4 will not drop needles
5 dog and Cat won't drink out of the water can under the tree.
6 don't need to be trimmed
7 not as cool to climb in if you're a cat
Real 1 beautiful
2 lucky if they last the season
3 burn like crazy if ignited
4 drop needles if the dog has emptied the water can.
5 cat loves to climb (after all its a real tree,could be something up there to hunt!)
6 Great fun for the whole family to go and get one (frozen feet, cold hands, whiney adults, I mean kids, cooking hot dogs on a campfire and draging a tree home thats generally 4 feet taller that the space where it is to be set up.

All in All I like Real

Posted by: Bill | [December 22, 2009 02:02 PM](#)

My daughter decorates her indoor orange tree. She grew it from a seed and it reaches the ceiling. The tree looks very festive with blue lights and bulbs. The nasty part is it has long thorns. I would like to decorate a plant that could later be planted out doors. I am trying to find what shrubs can be started indoors and then later transplanted in the spring. Perhaps a peony.....Toni

Posted by: Anonymous | [December 23, 2009 11:06 AM](#)

These are some interesting points being tabled here. It is my personal opinion that a real tree is the greener option. Of course providing it was grown without much pesticides and harm to the environment. I believe this because in my humble opinion it is better to grow than destroy....a live tree contributes for up to 5 years to its environment. Contributing to the soil,air,wildlife ect for those five years helps us. In addition the harvesting can be done with relatively little harm to the environment if the tree farmer chooses to. On the other hand the artificial tree is made of many different substances. Some of these are gathered by useing heavy equipment burning a lot of fossil fuels. Other materials are made in industrial plants out of many different compounds some of which are toxic as well. These industrial plants are huge pollutors. When the tree is made it is put in a bow to be shipped. That box was made from wood pulp which involves you guessed it...even more pollution. To end this discussion after a few years the owner of the fake tree is bored with it. So it is thrown away to leach its toxic soup into our environment.Ill take a real tree anyday. An awesome subject, Regards,Marcus

Posted by: Marcus M | [February 23, 2010 02:30 PM](#)

November 13, 2009

To Print or not to Print...



Because one of **Get Dawson Creek Green's** objectives is to run a 'paperless' office, so it's often an ethical dilemma as to whether something gets printed or not. I suppose some offices might be able to run 100% paperless, but most still need to do some printing. I think the important thing here is to seriously consider BEFORE hitting 'print'. We've made that a little easier to do by having the printer connected to the reception computer only.

If you have to walk out to reception, ask the receptionist to allow you to use the computer for a minute, and bring up the document on the reception computer

before you can print it, you have a bit of a 'cooling off' period.

Somewhere between your computer and the reception computer you might think "Hey, I don't really need a printed copy of this information to pass on to so-and-so, I can just email it to them!"

I'd like to hear comments from anyone who's worked in a paperless office. Any hints?

Linda S

Posted by **Get Dawson Creek Green** at 10:51 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

Comments

paper less eh?

Its kind of a stretch, I've been a long time using paper in an office environment. I will have to think about ways of making it work, why it should work and what the benefits will be. Don't forget there are huge industries and many livelihoods involved in the production of paper. On a small scale no problem on a large scale not so sure.

Posted by: **Bill** | [December 22, 2009 02:11 PM](#)

It's true that drastic changes can have drastic repercussions, but on the other hand, industry needs to be in tune to consumer behaviour so it can meet the needs dictated by that behaviour. I think that consumers basing their consumption patterns on the needs of industry is a rather backward form of capitalism (and capitalism is what we have, like it or not). I also believe that consumers register their needs through their purchasing habits, and if the demand for un-recycled or un-recyclable paper drops, and the demand for recycled paper increases then industry will adjust their products and production to accommodate that demand. Another aspect of a shift to less paper or, at least a shift to higher recycled content, is that it may stimulate economic growth in other areas of manufacture or re-manufacture or even in other industries. Quite honestly, I would imagine more jobs would be lost to new technology that makes certain jobs redundant than to shifting consumer habits.

Posted by: **Linda S** | [January 7, 2010 03:19 PM](#)

Links

[Energy Efficiency](#)

[Solar Energy](#)

[Wind Energy](#)

[Geo Thermal Energy](#)

[Water Conservation](#)

[Grants and Assistance](#)

[Going Paperless](#)

[Community Gardens\Composting](#)

[Shopping Green](#)

[Recycling](#)

[Vermiculture](#)

[Green Cleaning](#)

[Hydro Systems](#)

Energy Efficiency

[The Government of Canada's eco-ENERGY Retrofit grant](#), and other related news for homeowners.

[Energy Savings Plans](#) Energy saving tips, workshops, incentives, and benefits.

[Energy Star's](#) qualified products for homeowners and builders.

[How to Install Plastic on Single Pane Windows](#) A very clear, step by step YouTube video

Solar Energy

[Energy Resources](#) A site full of easy to understand information on how solar energy works.

[Solar Energy Alternatives](#). Focuses on the design, sale and maintenance of alternate energy.

Wind Energy

[Canadian Wind Energy Association \(Canwea\)](#). Information on what causes wind and how it can be used.

[Peace Energy Co-operative \(PEC\)](#). The site for the people behind the Bear Mountain Wind Project.

[Energy Resources](#) A site with easy to understand information on Wind Energy.

Geo Thermal Energy

Canadian Geothermal Consortium: Geothermal for space heating.

Energy Resources: Easy to understand Information on geothermal power.

Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium: Excellent information on geothermal exchange, resources, illustrations, and videos.

GeoExchange BC: Tutorial on geothermal exchange with illustrations.

Water Conservation

Tips from the Government of Canada on how to save water around the house.

What the Government of British Columbia is doing to help the province conserve water.

BC Climate Action. Information on water conservation.

Grants and Assistance

Natural Resources Canada: Grants/Rebates.

Energy Star Rebates in Canada.

Going Paperless

Apartment Therapy shows you how to go (mostly) paperless with easy to duplicate ideas.

PC World has an article on building the paperless office.

Microsoft has 6 Tips for you on creating a paperless office.

How to do things like achieve a paperless office.

Canada Revenue Agency has Information Circular on Electronic Record Keeping IC05-1

Community Gardens\Composting

Dawson Creek Community Garden is your local community garden.

Canadian Gardening has articles on Community Gardening.

The Garden of Oz has articles on composting.

WikiHow shows you how to Compost.

PRRRDY says that it has comprehensive instructions on composting.

Plant a Row Grow a Row donates fresh food from the

community garden to the local food bank.

Shopping Green

[Furoshiki](#) the Japanese art of gift wrapping offers a green alternative to single use gift wrap.

[Earth 911](#) shows you how to maintain green shopping habits.

[EcoLabelling](#) has lists of logos used on eco-friendly products in North America.

[Greener Choices](#) offers lists and articles about buying green products.

[Energy Star](#) is your source for lists of energy efficient products.

Recycling

[NIEHS Kid's Page](#) has simple to understand facts about the ins and outs of the 3 "R"s.

[Planet Green](#) has tips on starting recycling.

[Plastic info](#) has some tips on reducing holiday waste through recycling

Vermiculture

[City Farmer](#) has good information on all aspects of Vermiculture.

[Cathy's Crawly Composters](#) is a kid friendly Vermiculture site.

[Wikipedia](#); the online encyclopedia has a wealth of knowledge on vermiculture.

[Rodale Institute](#) has a business point of view of vermiculture.

[Organic Agriculture Center of Canada](#) has a farmers manual on Vermiculture and vermicomposting.

Green Cleaning

[Canadian Living](#) can help you make natural cleaning products.

[Care 2 make a difference?](#) This site does by showing you how to make a Non-toxic cleaning kit.

[Learn about cleaning products](#) from this site that has information on what goes into your cleaning products.

Circle of life wants you use these several recipes for various green cleaning applications.

HGTV has some tips on natural ingredients that can be used for cleaning.

Hydro Systems

BC Hydro has links to 3 PDF's, that have information on micro hydro sites and legal requirements

Alternate Energy News has some interesting FAQs on hydro power

Homepower contains more in depth info on hydro power

Resources

Alternate Energy Business Directory

Alternate Energy Businesses in Dawson Creek, BC											
	Products			Service			Consulting			Training	
	Solar	Wind	Geo Thermal	Solar	Wind	Geo Thermal	Solar	Wind	Geo Thermal		Green
NEAT info@neat.ca										X	
Boe's Trailer Sales boes@pris.ca	X										
Epscan Industries Ltd. danp@epsca.ca	X	X		X	X		X	X			
Peavey Mart peavey050@telus.net	X	X									
Peace Country GeoThermal more information 90 Kb			X			X			X		