

**Tecumseh Arena solar project launched** by Cheryl Hardcastle

Students from St. Pius X School joined Honourable Dwight Duncan, Mayor Gary McNamara, and Essex Power President, Mr. Ray Tracey for a ribbon cutting ceremony to launch one of the largest roof top solar systems in Canada. The event took place on Friday, April 16, 2010, with members of Tecumseh council and administration in attendance as well.

The renewable energy project will generate 500 kilowatts (KW) of power from the photo voltaic panels on the roof of the arena which will be fed into the energy grid for use, an arrangement that's approved by the Ontario Power Authority. The Honourable Mr. Duncan delivered the Feed In Tariff contract guaranteed over the next 20 years.

"With the passing of the Green Energy Act, I am pleased that the Town of Tecumseh and Essex Power have joined together to develop such a wonderful project," said Dwight Duncan. "After receiving final approval from the OPA, the project is ready to go and I am pleased to be a part of today's event and present Essex Power Company and the Town of Tecumseh with their FIT contract."

Mayor Gary McNamara is thrilled that the Town of Tecumseh will host the inaugural solar power project in Southwestern Ontario. "The Town of Tecumseh is going Green and we couldn't be more proud. We are investing in one of the largest roof top solar systems in Canada with the best Energy efficient company in Ontario, Essex Power," he said. \

The Town's contribution to the \$3.2 million project is \$400,000, as a shareholder in Essex Power's new green energy subsidiary, Essex Energy. Essex Power has also contributed \$400,000 and the rest has been financed through TD Canada Trust. The guaranteed contract ensures a 7% return on the investment every year for four years. In five years the return will be 11% and could go beyond that depending on performance.

"The system will prevent the emission of 208 Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide per year, which is the equivalent of 117 cars and light trucks taken off the road or 70 homes powered for a year," the Mayor said.

The solar project is expected to be operational by this summer. The arena is undergoing a \$1.5 million refurbishing, separate from the solar project, however, coordinated in its timing. The improved insulation work along with the new roof absorbing the sun's heat, will help achieve a 35% energy consumption reduction, which Mayor McNamara says will be monitored in the first year to accurately portray the results of the project. Being a first, in terms of the largest project by a public entity and the largest roof-top project, the Town is prepared to share the knowledge gained from it.

"We'll be seeing more projects like this in our area because we get more sunshine than other parts of the province," Minister Duncan explained to the grade-schoolers in attendance.