

Community Excellence Awards

2018 Application Form

Please complete and return the application form by Friday, May 25, 2018. All questions are required to be answered by typing directly in this form. If you have any questions, contact awards@ubcm.ca or (250) 356-5193.

SECTION 1: Applicant Information	
Local Government: District of Hudson's Hope	Complete Mailing Address: PO Box 330 Hudson's Hope, BC V0C 1V0
Contact Person: Gwen Johansson	Position: Mayor
Phone: 250 783 9901	E-mail: mayor@hudsonshope.ca

SECTION 2: Category
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellence in Governance. <i>Governance processes or policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long term thinking.</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellence in Service Delivery. <i>Projects/programs that provide effective services in a proactive manner, demonstrate benefit to the community, and utilize performance measures, benchmarks and standards to ensure sustainable service delivery.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellence in Asset Management. <i>Projects/programs that demonstrate a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellence in Sustainability. <i>Projects/programs that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering cultural, social, economic and environmental issues in planning, policy and practice.</i></p>

SECTION 3: Project/Program Details

1. Name of the Project/Program:

Hudson's Hope Solar Project

2. Project/Program Summary. Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

The Hudson's Hope Solar Project takes advantage of the BC Hydro Grid-Tie Net Metering Program, which allows customers to generate some of their own electricity, but still allows for regular electricity delivery service from the BC Hydro grid.

Hudson's Hope received a grant of \$1.35 million from the Strategic Priorities Fund / Federal Gas Tax Fund, which is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities. The money was used to install 1550 solar panels at nine different municipal sites, with a total generating capacity of one half a megawatt or 500 kilowatts. The solar electricity that is generated powers the specific site first, then feeds any excess power into the BC Hydro grid. The excess power is recorded as a kilowatt hour credit that will be applied later on that electrical account, when generation isn't meeting demand. At the end of the year, a balance showing a credit or deficit is calculated. If the site generated more than was used, the municipality receives 9.999 cents per kWh from BC Hydro. If more electricity was taken from the grid, the municipality pays the regular metered rate for the outstanding balance.

In 2000, the municipality's electricity bill was \$68,000; in 2017, it was \$188,000. Rates and use have risen significantly and we believe that trend will continue. Based on 2017 rates and very conservative estimates, we believe that the municipality will save \$75,000 per year and \$3 million over 30 years: funds for infrastructure, recreation, or other services.

3. Demonstrating Excellence. Please describe how your project/program demonstrates excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC and provides promising practices for others to follow.

Local government is in the business of supplying services for residences. Most of those services involve use of electricity, either in lighting of streets and buildings, aeration for sewer lagoons, pumps for water supply and treatment and so on. Electricity costs have escalated in recent years. Self-generation of a portion of a municipality's electricity demand will save significant money which can be used to provide other services. This applies to all municipal governments and we have found surrounding municipalities to be very keen to explore self-generation for their own benefit.

4. Category Criteria.

A. Please describe how your project/program meets the objectives of the category you

have applied under. Refer to S. 3 of the Program & Application Guide.

The solar array produces electricity which will be used within the municipal buildings and sewer treatment system. It will benefit our financial objective of providing services in the most cost-effective manner. It has not yet been integrated into our Official Community Plan as it is so new.

To our knowledge, this project is the largest municipal grid-tie electricity program in BC. (Kimberly has a larger solar generation project but to our understanding is a commercial venture, whereas this is aimed at providing municipal service.)

This project provides a very effective and efficient service to our municipality. We have been very proactive in pursuing the Strategic Priorities Grant and in choosing a project that will serve this community in perpetuity.

Monitoring the solar arrays allows for up-to-date operational information to maximize revenue and reduce costs. The data for each site is also presented on a publicly viewable 'kiosk' screen which makes solar more accessible and educational for the community. On the anniversary date for each site, we will be able to report exactly how much electricity that site fed into the grid, and how much was drawn from the grid and how much money was saved for the District.

Solar panels have a 25 year warranty; experts point to many panels, inverters and accompanying equipment which have been operating for much longer. We expect the system to continue indefinitely with minimal maintenance costs.

This is the first municipal grid-tie project in this region. Surrounding communities (Taylor, Pouce Coupe, Chetwynd Area B) attended our recent official opening and are taking the information back to their councils. Other communities (Dawson Creek, Fort ST John) have been motivated by this project to ask Peace Energy Co-op for a presentation to their entire council.

B. In many cases projects may meet the criteria of more than one category. If applicable, please describe how your project meets the criteria of one or more other categories.

The Solar Project is an economic benefit with a very small environmental footprint. We expect it to serve the community for as long as the sun shines and electrical grids exist. In comparison to dams, wind, coal or gas-fired generating stations, the environmental impact of this project is very small. Almost all of the solar panels are installed on the roofs of existing municipal buildings, where there is virtually no impact. The pole-mounted sewage lagoon installation is out of the way, at the lagoon edge. The "Solar Wave" at the swimming pool has multi-purposes: shade for parents waiting for children's swim lessons to be completed, picnic place and as a sculpture. (We expect the "Solar Wave" to become the signature piece for this innovative project.)

SECTION 4: Program Criteria

5. Leadership. Describe the extent to which your local government acted as a local or regional leader in the development or implementation of the project/program.

Hudson's Hope took the initiative to apply for the grant. This is an innovative project – the first large municipal project to go on-line that we are aware of. The solar project looked to the future, not the past. We chose Peace Energy Co-op, based in Dawson Creek but active in the Peace River region, over companies from the Lower Mainland or southern Alberta, to build the project. They, in turn, hired another local firm to do the installation work. This gave the Co-op the opportunity to expand beyond the single residence installations they'd previously done, and it worked out very well: it improved the profile of a local co-operative and a local business.

In the past year, we have spoken about, and distributed information about the advantages of the Hydro grid-tie program to the members of the Peace River Regional District, the Mayor's Caucus in Prince George, and the North Central Local Government Association. As noted above, this has stimulated interest in neighbouring communities who expressed interest in following the Hudson's Hope lead.

6. Partnerships and collaboration. Describe the breadth and depth of community and/or regional partnerships that supported the project/program and the extent to which internal and/or external collaboration was evident.

This was a Hudson's Hope project. The extent of collaboration with neighbouring communities was to share the information, extol the possibilities, invite them to participate in the workshops and to attend the official opening.

See #8 for description of public engagement.

7. Innovation and promising practices. Describe the degree to which the project/program demonstrated creativity and innovation, and contributed to increased efficiency or effectiveness.

The project is innovative in that it has not been done at this scale by a municipality to our knowledge. Certainly not in this region. It is increasing our efficiency in that it is saving the municipality money as we speak and promises to be an increasingly major money-saver each year in the foreseeable future.

8. Public engagement and communications. Describe the extent to which public engagement was foundational to the success of the project/program, including the use of communication tools such as social media.

In cooperation with Peace Energy Co-op, we brought the public in very early. I explained the project in the monthly municipal Bulletin. Peace Energy Co-op organized a work-shop to explain the grid-tie program, which attracted a much larger than anticipated 80 participants. We have included a description of the program and progress reports on the District website. We celebrated the official opening with a free public barbecue, an information session, and a tour of the sites for anyone interested.

9. Transferability. Describe the degree to which the process or outcomes of the project, or other learnings, could be conveyed to other UBCM members.

Hudson's Hope is happy to share any information we have with any municipalities interested. This could be done through printed information, verbal presentations or by explaining how to monitor our project on the internet, where generation historical and real time data is available. We could make presentations at UBCM's morning sessions if there is interest.

SECTION 5: Additional Information

10. Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

A Hudson's Hope resident initiated this project by installing solar panels on his residence, which generated considerable curiosity. He made a presentation to Council which piqued Council's interest. He had a good first year, and generated more electricity than he used, which garnered him a cheque from BC Hydro, in addition to zero hydro bills for the year. It was a good start for our project.

The solar initiative has had benefits beyond being a money-saving endeavor:

Moch Contracting, who did the installations, went to the Hudson's Hope School, did a presentation, and hired seven high school students to work on panel installation. This was a huge boon to local student employment, where not a lot of student jobs are available. Not only did those students get a summer job, but they got experience in an emerging and fast-growing renewable energy industry. One student, I understand, is now interested in pursuing a career in the field. This also helped the public awareness and endorsement of the solar project: the student employees talked to their families and friends about the project and it quickly became "our solar project" in the community.

Seeing the solar panels go up on municipal buildings sparked interest among community members. They went and talked to Peace Energy Co-op and Moch Electric representatives to explore the pros and cons of solar power and grid-tie. As a result, we have at least 5 residences in the municipality that now have solar panels on their roofs. More interested folks attended the recent opening and are considering it for themselves.

SECTION 6: Signature

Applications are required to be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.

Name: Gwen Johansson

Title: Mayor

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Date:

All applicants are required to submit:

- Signed application form. Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files.
- Five representatives photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files.

If you choose to submit your application by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

Submit applications to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities