

Success no accident for Orillia Power

BY DAVE DAWSON

Success can come in many ways — but it is rarely an accident.

While Orillia Power boasts electricity rates that are in the lowest five per cent in the province and annually funnels, on average, more than \$2 million into city coffers, the organization is perhaps most proud of its safety record.

"In November, we reached a milestone of not having a lost-time accident in six years," said John Mattinson, president of Orillia Power Corporation. "That is a very significant achievement that we are very proud of."

It has also led to the local company being recognized with a coveted Silver Award by the province-wide Electrical and Utilities Safety Association.

"They come in and do an audit and we have to show that health and safety is built into our business plan and into the culture here and it is," said Mattinson. "Everyone here is committed to workplace safety."

Staff is also committed to maximizing capacity for its more than 12,000 customers. With that in mind, the organization is involved in numerous conservation programs. "We are continuing to promote conservation programs and will once again this year do our Great Refrigerator

BEHIND THE POWER

Orillia Power has annual sales in excess of \$20 million per year while serving more than 12,000 customers.

The Swift generating station on the Severn River has a capability of producing 7,800 kilowatts.

The Minden generating station on the Gull River can produce 3,800 kilowatts and Matthias generating station on the Muskoka River can produce 2,800 kilowatts.

Roundup, take part in the Summer Sweepstakes program and various other initiatives," said Mattinson. He said Orillia Power has partnered with the federal government in its Dollars to Sense program to help local industries and has also run the Electricity Retrofit Incentive Program which helps commercial clients with incentives to modernize to greener energy alternatives.

Orillia Power is also trying to develop more generating capacity — a challenge hampered by the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) complex. In fact, Orillia Power proposed a facility for Go Home Lake that would have helped reduce greenhouse gases by the equivalent of 8,000 vehicles each year. "Unfortunately, a small number of cottagers are

holding that up but we haven't given up on the project because it's an excellent site. We have some other sites in mind but due to the competitive nature of this aspect of our business, I can't say more than that."

But he can say lots about smart meters. This year, smart meters will be installed for every customer — although they may not be fully functional for a year. The idea is "instead of building new generation to meet the needs, to shift use to when it's cheaper. It benefits the customer and frees up electricity at peak times."

Whatever happens, Mattinson said the year ahead looks promising.

"Last year was a record year for generation and this past January was even better than the January before," said Mattinson. That's good news for the City of Orillia — Orillia Power's sole shareholder. It's also good news for the community.

"We give a lot back to the community," said Mattinson. "We made a \$2.25 million commitment to the hospital and we're involved with many other local charities."

Orillia Power is also a leader in its field. "We are locally accountable, our rates are very competitive, our reliability is near the top... We have lots to be proud of."