

REGIONAL

Village charged up over e-truck

Electric-powered vehicle will cruise Montrose streets

BY VALERIE SCHILLACI
Times Staff

Montrose will soon be charging up its newest vehicle and Fortis will be watching how the electric vehicle works.

An electric truck is expected to arrive this week and will add to the village's fleet of combustion vehicles: a one-ton utility truck, tool cat, garbage truck and two dump/plow trucks.

With a promise to reach carbon neutrality by 2012 and an additional staff person on board, the village decided in December that it would be best to purchase a new vehicle that will have no impact on its carbon footprint and lower operational costs.

The Might-E Truck is a zero-emission vehicle built on a heavy-duty chassis and powered entirely from electric batteries, which are 97 per cent recyclable.

The truck – which has no exhaust pipe, requires no gasoline, transmission fluid or antifreeze – draws energy from the batteries that power the electric motor. Some energy is even fed back into the batteries through regenerative braking when the vehicle decelerates.

Montrose has partnered

with FortisBC for a pilot project – the vehicle will be re-charged during off-peak times for a lower electrical rate and will be part of a Fortis study.

“We know that electric cars are coming, it's no secret, but this will allow us to look at the impact,” said Blair Weston of Fortis.

“It's hard to convince households to not use power during peak times but this will show an economic model.”

Fortis looks to find out how much power these vehicles need on a regular basis and at the same time encourage residents to think of using power during low-peak times.

“If you drove 80 kilometres, it would be similar to running your oven for two hours.”

RANDY HOLMQUIST

The project will not only help the company prepare for the future of electric vehicles but will also demonstrate what kind of power and financial savings can be made by doing some everyday chores during low-power times.

“By doing a load of laundry at night, starting the thermostats later in the morning . . . you can even put a timer on your dishwasher,” said Weston, noting that customers can attach timers to program household items to turn on at a scheduled hour.

“We're very proud of the village of Montrose for taking the first step,” he said.

The village also pumps its water from wells during off times, explained



Montrose expects its Might-E Truck to arrive this week. The electric vehicle will lower greenhouse gas emissions in the village, according to its administrator.

village administrator Kevin Chartres. After off-peak power options were employed in 2007, the village reduced power costs by 50 per cent.

Though the \$30,000 truck is more expensive than a two-wheel drive truck for around \$17,000, Chartres says Montrose will benefit in the long run.

The truck will travel for 70 to 90 kilometres once fully charged, depending on how fast an individual drives, stops, drives and the weight of a load.

It costs about six cents to drive 10 kilometres, according to Randy Holmquist of Canadian Electric Vehicles, the Errington, B.C., company that makes the Might-E Truck.

“If you drove 80 kilo-

metres it would be similar to running your oven for two hours,” he said, of the truck's electricity use.

Comparing the electric vehicle to a Ford F150, Canadian Electric Vehicles notes the electric truck releases no carbon-dioxide emissions, while an F150 will discharge 17.49 tonnes after 40,000 kilometres of travel.

Chartres estimates that the 21 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from the village fleet accounts for 28 per cent of the total emissions from the village.

He expects that greenhouse gas levels will actually reduce by 1.3 tonnes by using the electric vehicle at times instead of a combustion truck.

“The decision to pur-

chase an electric vehicle over a combustion vehicle could potentially save the village up to five tonnes of (greenhouse gas) emissions per year,” explained Chartres in a staff report.

The village has agreed to place Fortis Power Sense logos on the vehicle and has given Fortis the right to use the vehicle's results in an ongoing case study.

Fortis will supply and install a time-of-use meter, will charge the village off-peak electricity rates and give Montrose \$5,000 in operational funding to help offset costs.

“The vehicle will be used for all public works activities within the village, it has a load capacity of over 900 kilograms so it is a real work vehicle,” adds Chartres.

KSCU doles out over \$4.6M in profit shares BIZ BUZZ

By Valerie Schillaci

Kootenay Savings is sharing over \$4.6 million in profit-sharing dividends this year, marking the ninth year a 10 per cent dividend has been paid out.

Members earn profit-sharing dividends based on the amount of interest they paid on loans and the amount of interest earned on deposits.

“It is particularly satisfying to share our success in 2009,” said CEO and president Brent Tremblay in a press release. “Last year was a challenging year for many, and our tremendous success is due in no small part to the commitment of our staff and the loyalty of our member-owners.”

The member-owned financial institution has 13 branches, with a head office in Trail. The credit union has over \$835 million in assets, 41,000 members and over 270 employees.

Since 1992, over \$57 million has been distributed to members, who can choose to transfer their share of profits into RRSPs and gain the benefit of a tax credit.

CONFERENCE HELD IN GOLDEN

Columbia Basin glaciers shrinking, scientists report

BY COLIN PAYNE
Nelson Daily News

NELSON — They are the life-blood of Kootenay residents – and they are disappearing.

Our Glaciers, Our Legacy, a recent conference held in Golden by the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT), relayed the dismaying news that glaciers in the region have receded significantly in the last 100 years and will likely con-

tinue to do so into the future.

“It seems the glaciers are receding and getting smaller,” said Kindy Gosal, CBT director of water and environment. “We don't know the exact speed (of recession) because we haven't done the research that's required to get that information.”

“But we're starting to see stream-flow changes related to the recession of the glaciers.”

The information was presented by four prominent Canadian scientists in the field of climate change and glacial studies, and Bob Sandford, chair of the United Nations Water for Life Decade.

Gosal said the trend of melting glaciers could present significant challenges for residents of the region down the road.

“A substantial amount of our water in the summer comes from

glaciers,” he noted. “So what that means is the stream flow and available water from our river systems is going to be reduced compared to what we've been used to historically. That means there's potential for lower stream flows and less available water in some of the rivers and streams in late August and early September if we don't get rain.”

“The glaciers are large reserves

of water. They're like bank account of water and we've been drawing on them. Those reserves are getting noticeably smaller to the eye.”

Gosal said the recent studies of the Columbia Basin glaciers are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to glacial studies in the Columbia Basin and there's little data to compare the findings with.

“A lot more information needs to be gathered on these issues.”

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