

Resourceful. Responsible.

March 20, 2009

It's Lights Out for Alberta Legislature and McDougall Centre

Government buildings go dark for Earth Hour 2009

Edmonton... For one hour on Saturday, March 28, the Alberta government will join Albertans and people from communities around the world in turning off their lights for Earth Hour 2009. Between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. all non-essential lights will be turned off at the Alberta Legislature Building in Edmonton and McDougall Centre in Calgary as a symbol of support for action on climate change.

Earth Hour is a global lights out initiative created by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). March 28 marks the second global celebration. In 2008, people in 30 countries participated in Earth Hour, including 150 Canadian cities such as Edmonton and Calgary.

This year, in recognition of Earth Hour 2009, the Government of Alberta encourages all employees to turn off their office computers when they go home for the weekend on Friday, March 27, and support the global lights out initiative by turning off their non-essential lights at 8:30 p.m. Saturday evening.

Turning off lights for Earth Hour 2009 is just one example of the Government of Alberta's commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability. Government continues to reduce the environmental impact of its buildings and building infrastructure by improving energy practices, recycling, and implementing environmental programs that cover the range of a building's life cycle from design and construction to operations and maintenance. Government also continues to inform and engage Albertans in initiatives to reduce waste, water and energy consumption.

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Attachment: backgrounder

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Alberta government actions to conserve energy or water and reduce waste

Energy Programs

- By improving energy practices, government has reduced its energy use by about 10% in the last decade.
- Since 2005, over 90% of the electricity used by Alberta government buildings has come from green power sources (wind, biomass), reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 200,000 tonnes annually.
- Greenhouse gas reduction is equivalent to taking 42,550 Alberta vehicles off the road for one year, or replacing 118,000 vehicles with hybrids.

Recycling

- Since 2006, government has diverted more than 90,000 mercury-containing items from landfills through its fluorescent lamp and mercury recycling program.
- As of early 2009, government has started recycling batteries generated from business operations.

BOMA BEST

- Alberta continues to concentrate on certifying government-owned buildings through the Building Owners and Managers Association's BOMA BEST program, previously known as the BOMA Go Green Program.
- The program focuses on: improving workplace environments by making them safer and healthier, reducing energy consumption, cutting operating costs, and improving waste management.
- As of March 1, 2009, 48 government buildings are BOMA BEST certified with a plan to certify a total of 80-90 over the next year, representing all of government's major owned buildings.

LEED

- In 2006, Alberta adopted Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver as its environmental design standard for new provincial buildings.
- LEED Silver buildings are up to 45% more energy-efficient than conventional buildings, cost less to operate, and provide a healthier work environment through improved air quality and use of natural light.

One Simple Act

- The One Simple Act program encourages Albertans to help protect the environment by committing to simple actions towards waste reduction, energy or water conservation. Since the program was launched in June 2008, Albertans have made over 11,000 pledges, which collectively will result in a reduction of:
 - more than 890,000 kg of carbon dioxide, the equivalent of almost 400 car trips across Canada;
 - more than 240,000 kg of waste; and,
 - almost 22,500 liters of water, the equivalent of almost 250,000 bathtubs.
- For more information about One Simple Act, visit www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca.

Earth Hour 2009

- Turning off all non-essential lights at the Alberta Legislature Building and McDougall Centre in Calgary, March 28, 2009 at 8:30 p.m., as a symbol of support for action on climate change.

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