



## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***BC's Largest Solar Project Begins Operation***

*SunMine means bright future for sunny resort city Kimberley, BC*

(KIMBERLEY, BC) The City of Kimberley is pleased to announce that SunMine is commercially operational. The 1.05 MW (megawatt) solar project is B.C.'s first grid-connected solar facility, as well as being Canada's largest project to use solar trackers.

SunMine consists of 4,032 solar-cell modules mounted on 96 trackers which follow the sun's movement, thereby maximizing solar exposure. The German-engineered trackers provide as much as 38% more energy than a fixed system. The trackers capitalize on the electricity generated during the morning and evening, peak demand times when BC Hydro has the greatest need for electricity and pays a premium for it.

Production data since June 22<sup>nd</sup> confirms that the energy being generated by the SunMine is exceeding the modeled design potential.

According to Kimberley Mayor Don McCormick, "SunMine is a great example of the resiliency of our community. We are thriving and pursuing new and innovative directions. Although SunMine is the largest solar facility in BC, it is relatively small. As the SunMine proves its potential, the City of Kimberley is looking to expand it and have already had several inquiries from prospective partners." SunMine is supplying enough electricity to the BC Hydro grid to power approximately 200 homes.

"SunMine is a symbol of Kimberley's commitment to the environment. When Kimberley's mineral resources were depleted, we took advantage of our solar potential and developed a new resource which is renewable," said Scott Sommerville, Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Kimberley. Kimberley receives the most sunshine in B.C. (over 300 days per year), and the community-owned SunMine is well suited to capitalize on these clear and sunny conditions.

“Innovative, private clean energy projects have helped power B.C. since the 1980s and are a cornerstone of B.C.’s energy policy,” said Minister Bennett, Minister of Energy and Mines. “The Sun Mine project has the potential to spur interest in development of other solar projects, bringing more jobs and economic benefits to communities across B.C.”

Teck provided use of the land and site infrastructure as well as a \$2 million contribution towards the project. SunMine is located on Teck’s former Sullivan Mine site, which has been fully reclaimed.

“Participating in SunMine reflects both Teck’s commitment to supporting local communities, even after mining has ceased, and our focus on expanding the use of alternative energy,” said Don Lindsay, President and CEO of Teck. “We’re proud to be contributing to the long-term prosperity of Kimberley and commend the City for their entrepreneurial spirit.”

The City of Kimberley gratefully acknowledges the support of Columbia Basin Trust and the Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust and the Province’s \$1 million contribution through the Innovative Clean Energy Fund.

The SunMine project was conceived and supported by the Vancouver-based EcoSmart Foundation. “I’m extremely pleased that SunMine’s initial operation confirms the expected performance benefits of the project’s innovative design,” said EcoSmart CEO Michel de Spot. “Solar energy is one of the fastest growing industries in North America and its potential in BC is exceptional. EcoSmart is proud to have collaborated with Teck and Kimberley on this innovative project.”

Free public tours of SunMine are being offered several times per day from July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 5<sup>th</sup>. To sign up for tours, visit [www.sunmine.ca](http://www.sunmine.ca) or call the Kimberley Visitor Centre at 778-481-1891.

More information on the project can be found at [www.sunmine.ca](http://www.sunmine.ca)

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( Attached )

Appendix A – Fast Facts

Appendix B – Quotations

## **Appendix A – Fast Facts & Brief History**

### ***Fast Facts***

SunMine is:

- A 1.05 megawatt solar power plant constructed on the former site of Canada's largest underground mine within City limits.
- The first large-scale solar facility in Canada to use solar trackers.
- The first re-development of a former mine site into a solar facility in Canada.
- The first large-scale solar photo-voltaic facility developed, owned, and operated by a Canadian municipality.
- The first grid-connected solar facility in British Columbia.
- The first installation 1000V DC solar installation outside of Ontario.
- The highest altitude solar facility in Canada at 1,200 M.
- SunMine trackers optimize solar exposure in two dimensions, and sense loads to shed snow and wind.

### ***Brief History***

- 2008: City of Kimberley and Teck are approached by EcoSmart.
- 2008 thru 2010: EcoSmart and the City work to develop SunMine concept; apply for funding; undertake on-site energy testing with solar PV systems.
- 2011: SunMine selected to receive \$1M in funding through the Province of BC Innovative Clean Energy Fund.
- 2011: Public presentation on the SunMine concept, including the preliminary business model and yield projections.
- 2011: Teck announces a \$2 million contribution to SunMine.
- 2011: 76% of referendum voters are in favour of the City borrowing \$2 million towards the construction of SunMine, to be repaid through SunMine revenue.
- 2011-2013: Roles, responsibilities, and ownership are negotiated.
- 2012: Significant changes to project ownership structure are negotiated to comply with funders' requirements.
- 2013: Request for Qualifications (RFQ) are issued and evaluated and Conergy Canada is selected as Prime Contractor.
- 2013-2014: 18 agreements and contracts are developed with eight different organizations.
- April 2014: City Council decision to proceed with construction.
- June 2015: SunMine begins commercial operation.

## **Appendix B - Quotations**

### **Columbia Basin Trust**

"Congratulations to the City of Kimberley and all of the partners involved on the successful completion of this new community asset," said Neil Muth, Columbia Basin Trust President and CEO. "We're proud to be a part of helping Kimberley further its vision to be a sustainable and innovative city."

### **BC Hydro**

"BC Hydro is very pleased that the innovative SunMine project has reached commercial operation and is now feeding power into the grid. We congratulate the hard-working teams who made this project a reality. SunMine was the first solar project to sign an electricity purchase agreement with BC Hydro, and now it is producing clean power for B.C." said Janet Fraser, BC Hydro Senior Vice-President, Energy, Regulatory and Business Planning.

### **SIDIT (Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust)**

"SIDIT looks forward to the completion of this innovative project," states Grace McGregor, SIDIT Chair. "Kimberley has the unique opportunity of generating economic diversification while protecting and enhancing the environment that will have a long term impact."