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City of Oshawa

**THE CITY OF OSHAWA  
GOES GREEN**

# THE CITY OF OSHAWA GOES GREEN

THE CITY OF OSHAWA, CANADA  
INCREASES ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
THROUGH EDUCATION AND VARIOUS  
GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

WRITTEN BY JOHN SHIMKUS  
PRODUCED BY XAN WYNNE-JONES



**F**OUNDED IN 1850 AROUND A natural inland deepwater harbour, the City of Oshawa is home to 152,000 residents in Canada's Durham Region. Located just 60 kilometres east of Toronto, the City is diverse, offering three universities, one community college, a deepwater port and an airport. It is also home to major corporations like General Motors Canada, where the all-electric Chevrolet Volt was designed. For the last decade, Oshawa has made it a point to boost energy efficiency throughout the city, and is incorporating both familiar and unique methods for doing so.

#### THE MAYORS' MEGAWATT CHALLENGE

In 2002, 10 municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) joined in the "Mayors' Megawatt Challenge." The program was a call to action for regional cities to take a proactive stance on energy efficiency, and representing a population of over eight million people. By 2003, Oshawa began inputting data for



benchmarking purposes into a database maintained by Interlife Consulting, which allows the City to run savings reports.

“Municipalities have unique buildings,” says City of Oshawa Senior Environmental Coordinator Suzanne Elston. “When you look at comparative data around energy you need to be able to benchmark. It’s difficult to benchmark when you have a one of a kind building. With this challenge, we are able to identify like buildings so we can judge if we’re performing well or poorly. It allows us to gauge energy performance. We have 23 buildings in the Mayors’ Megawatt Challenge, which



represents over 80 per cent of our energy footprint.”

Oshawa has partnered with local schools to offer students practical field experience while providing the City building audit services at a fraction of the cost. “We have an excellent working relationship with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and Durham College and we’re utilizing the technology they’re studying in some of our buildings,” notes Oshawa Mayor John Henry. “We use the graduating class of energy auditors from Durham College to audit our buildings for about 10 per cent of what it would have cost us to bring in

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MOBILE ENABLED



(from left to right) - Special Enforcement Services team – Greg Scarborough, Laura Osmond, George Carscadden (instructor), Bill Pearce, Jesse Edsall.

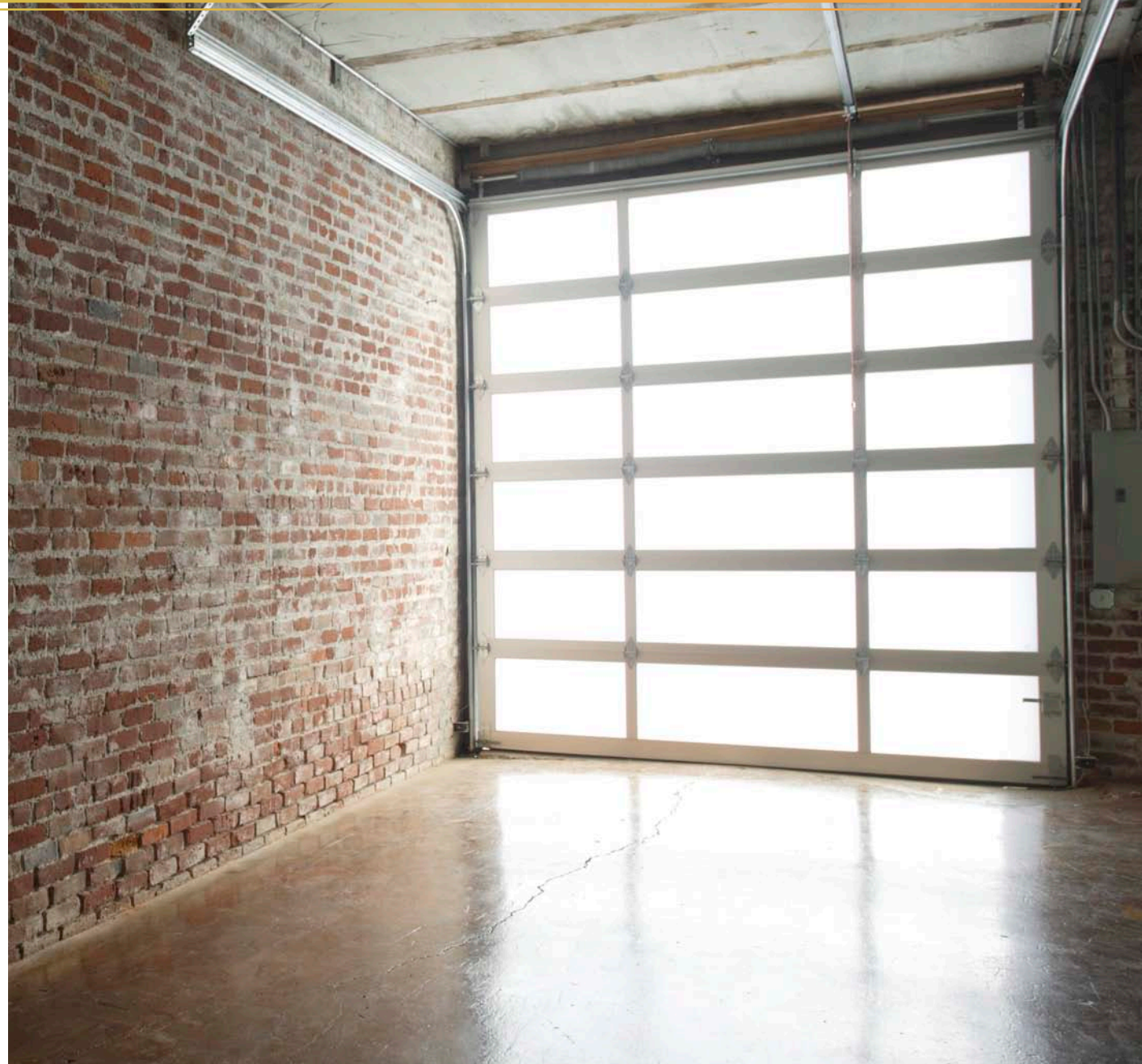
contractors. We're willing to establish this unwritten partnership that is working for not only the Universities, but the City of Oshawa as well. It allows the students to put our name on their resume."

"Energy" Ernie Davies, Manager of Oshawa's Office of Energy Management Program, notes, "In the savings report of 2008 versus 2005, we have a savings of 20.7 per cent for 16 buildings, versus Toronto at 11.6 with 12 buildings. This saved 3,500 tons of greenhouse gas emissions."

Oshawa's Mayor has also issued the "Mayor's Great Garage Challenge," a first-of-its-kind program encouraging residents to clean out their garages and donate old goods to charity. The idea is to allow vehicles to park in the warm garages, so during the cold winters, drivers can comply better with the City's anti-idling by-laws and keep the City's streets safer for cyclists, pedestrians and service vehicles.

### **EDUCATION VERSUS UPGRADES**

What's surprising about Oshawa's approach to energy savings is that instead of costly upgrades, the City first opted to educate its employees and residents on how to become more energy efficient. According to "Energy" Ernie, "70 per cent of energy



savings comes from how we use technology. 30 per cent comes from the technology itself, and people that use technology.” Oshawa PUC Networks Inc. (OPUCN) offers a number of energy saving programs for conservation-minded residents and businesses. OPUCN has teamed up with the Oshawa Public Libraries to bring residents and businesses the Watt Reader Lending Program. The readers are signed out with a library card, free of charge. Simply plug the reader into an outlet, and then plug an appliance/electronic device into the Watt Reader and the LCD display will provide instant data on its energy consumption.

The City has made a great effort in teaching workers how to use their electrical equipment more

wisely, and the bulk of energy savings has come from that simple action alone. Suzanne Elston describes the program’s efficacy, claiming, “We identified our eight largest recreational facilities, challenging

our staff to reduce energy consumption without buying any new equipment. Over a three-month period we reduced consumption by 600,000 kilowatt-hours just by teaching people how to use equipment.”

“ WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND DURHAM COLLEGE AND WE’RE UTILIZING THE TECHNOLOGY THEY’RE STUDYING IN SOME OF OUR BUILDINGS. ”

OSHAWA MAYOR JOHN HENRY

#### LEED CERTIFIED BUILDINGS

Various buildings throughout Oshawa have earned LEED Certification, including City Hall. The government building was retrofitted in two phases under the City Hall Revitalization Program. “We’ve reduced our energy footprint by half, saving \$500,000



Clean  
and  
renewable  
energy  
to power  
Ontario's  
growth



a year,” says Elston.

Oshawa is home to the first courthouse in Ontario to achieve LEED Gold certification which was built on a brownfield. The General Motors Centre, a sports and entertainment centre, was also constructed on a brownfield and in 2007 received the Canadian Urban Institute’s award for the Best Overall Project Award for Brownfield redevelopment.

Durham officials are now contemplating LEED Silver certification for a proposed new emergency service station.

#### THE ETHANOL REFINERY ISSUE

While Oshawa boosts its green image, there is one eyesore the City would prefer

to avoid. Mayor John Henry explains, “If you look at our harbour, we have a natural deepwater port right next to a significant wetlands, the biggest in the province, and there’s a park nearby, too. The problem is our port is federally owned, and they decided they want to build an ethanol refinery at the port. Durham Region’s second largest business is agriculture. We don’t grow corn here at our port, so building an ethanol refinery in a recreational and residential community doesn’t make sense. We are

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30 PER CENT COMES FROM THE  
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THAT USE TECHNOLOGY. ”

OSHAWA MAYOR JOHN HENRY

not against ethanol, but it should be built where they grow corn. They are not taking into consideration the number of trucks that will be travelling through our city. Our park is spectacular. We want to develop the lands north of the harbour to develop the residential and commercial real estate to offer restaurants and places for the community to enjoy.”

#### INTO THE FUTURE


The City of Oshawa is recognized as the third fastest growing city in Canada, and growth is expected to reach 2.7 per cent in 2012. Programs such as Smart



Mayor John Henry



(from left to right) – Gary Carroll, Director of Engineering, Suzanne Elston, Senior Environmental Coordinator, Patrick Lee, Manager, Development and Water Resources, “Energy” Ernie Davis, Manager, Office of Energy Management, Tom Hodgins, Commissioner, Development Services

Commute have seen the city’s businesses increase carpooling, and recently, Oshawa received a bronze award for being a “bike-friendly community” by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Also, the City of Oshawa was the first to introduce an all-hybrid building inspection fleet in the GTA. In addition, the City uses greener asphalt, biodiesel fuel and LED traffic signals. Along with the City’s Environmental Advisory Committee, Mayor John Henry hopes to unify the Region, saying, “The City of Oshawa is very proactive in changing the economic outlook of Oshawa into the economic outlook of the ‘Golden Horseshoe,’ where municipalities no longer compete with each other, but work together to compete on the world stage.” 

## STATISTICS



**Name:**  
City of Oshawa

**Country:**  
Canada

**Est:** 1850

**Population (City):** 152,000

**Population (Metro):** 330,594

**Mayor:**  
John Henry

**Senior Environmental  
Coordinator:** Suzanne Elston

**Office of Energy Management:**  
Ernie Davis

**Website:** [www.oshawa.ca](http://www.oshawa.ca)