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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town of Cardston Energizes Community with Solar Array

Cardston, Alberta – The Town of Cardston energized its new ground mounted Solar Array in July of 2020 to add 1.9 MW of green energy generation capacity. The bi-facial ground mounted panels are capable of producing electricity from light absorbed on both sides. Together with the Town’s roof-top solar installations on the Civic Centre and Charlie Cheesman Memorial Ice Arena, the Town can now supply enough renewable energy annually to meet the needs of all Town owned facilities, including the power hungry water and wastewater treatment plants, and all town streetlights.

The Town has taken the initiative to green the electricity consumed at its facilities as a contribution to Provincial greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. As a distribution system owner, the Town of Cardston has nearly completed a system wide energy conservation initiative aimed at converting all street lights to energy efficient LED technology.

Project Details:

- 4,752 panels covering 8.5 acres of Town owned land feeding 2,216,920 Kilowatt hours of electricity (2.2gWh) directly into the Town distribution system annually.
- The solar farm offsets 100% of electricity costs for all Town owned facilities, including streetlights.

Project Cost:

- \$3,832,120 with \$1,140,000 coming from the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre.

About the Town of Cardston

The Town of Cardston is an old rural Town 50km East of Waterton Lakes National Park, and an agricultural business hub for the southernmost parts of the province. Cardston exclusively owns and operates transmission and distribution infrastructure within the corporate limits of Cardston and greater franchise area, one of only 2 small Towns in Alberta to independently own their electrical infrastructure.

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BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE SOLAR PROJECT

For more than a century the Town has been developing infrastructure to meet the needs of the community. Today all of the essential municipal services are owned and operated by the Town including the electric distribution system which sets it apart from almost all small municipalities in Alberta. Like other distribution system owners, the Town recognizes that technology changes are reshaping electricity generation, delivery and consumption. Understanding and planning for change is the focus of an ongoing Inquiry by the Alberta Utilities Commission in which the Town is participating. The fundamental technological change is the ability to size renewable generation such as solar to the requirements at or near the site where the energy will be consumed.

The Town has taken the lead to demonstrate how renewable energy can be fed into the Distribution system and delivered for consumption by Town owned sites within our Distribution system. Electricity generation within the Town adds resilience to the Town's distribution system and frees up capacity on other distribution and transmission grid facilities that have traditionally delivered energy to the Town from large centrally located generation plants. The benefits of reduced dependence on the Provincial electric grid will also result from customers choosing to invest in generation at their residential or commercial sites in Cardston.

Funded in part by the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre and constructed in partnership with ENMAX Generation Portfolio Inc. the Solar Array is expected to produce renewable electric energy for at least the next 25 years.

Quick Facts:

- The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre is a partnership of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and the Government of Alberta. The MCCAC has helped Alberta municipalities, non-profit organizations, and schools implement energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions by investing over \$19.5 million since 2009.
- Energy production at or near the site of consumption reduces the energy lost in the delivery system when transported over long distances.
- Electric energy produced in Alberta is mostly fueled by coal and natural gas but reliance on renewable fuel sources such as solar, wind and geothermal continues to increase to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Quotes:

"I am proud of this project and its contribution to energy sustainability for our Town. Environmental responsibility and cost effectiveness can be joint outcomes of the production and consumption of energy within the Town through collective effort."

Maggie Kronen – Mayor, Town of Cardston

“The Town’s initiatives may lead to our being the lowest per capita GHG producing jurisdiction in the Province.”

Jeff Shaw – CAO, Town of Cardston

“As Mayor for the Town of Cardston, I am extremely pleased with the completion of the 1.90 Megawatt Solar Farm Project. It is up and running and generating clean renewable energy that supplies all the electrical needs of our Town owned buildings. This green energy capital project could never have been possible without the substantial grant that we received from the Municipal Climate Change Action Center (MCCAC) through the Alberta Municipal Solar Program (AMSP). MCCAC provided 20% (1.14 Million dollars) of the total cost of the project. It was the availability of such government grant that enticed our municipality to venture into a micro-generation project, for which we are most grateful. Solar energy is abundant in Southern Alberta and it was just the perfect fit for our Town desires to reduce its carbon footprint and generate some future revenues. Once again, thank you!”

Maggie Kronen – Mayor, Town of Cardston



4,752 panels covering 8.5 acres located within the Town of Cardston.