

Horizon Utilities Corporation receives performance excellence award

Horizon recognized by provincial industry association for financial and operational success of merging utilities in Hamilton and St. Catharines

(Hamilton / St. Catharines, ON) March 9, 2007 – Horizon Utilities Corporation has been recognized for the successful merger of Hamilton Hydro Inc. and St. Catharines Hydro Utility Services Inc., and the utility’s financial and operational performance following the merger.

Horizon Utilities is the recipient of the first Ontario Power Generation (OPG) Local Distribution Company (LDC) Performance Excellence Award. Horizon received the honour during the annual industry awards presented this week at the Electricity Distributors Association’s (EDA) annual general meeting in Toronto. The EDA is the voice of Ontario’s privately and publicly-owned local electricity distribution companies.

The award recognized “Horizon Utilities’ outstanding success in merging the electricity distribution companies in Hamilton and St. Catharines and its exceptional performance subsequent to the merger in each of the award categories: occupational health and safety, operational excellence, financial operations, retail strategies for conservation and demand management, and for contribution to the community.”

“We are pleased and honoured to be recognized provincially for what has been accomplished as a result of the merger and the hard work and commitment of our employees,” said Max Cananzi, President & CEO of Horizon Utilities Corporation. “In the two years since the merger we have accomplished many of the gains we anticipated would result from the merger. As well, we are exceeding expectations in many operational areas and have quickly evolved into a more innovative and future-oriented company.”

The ‘*Performance Excellence Award*’ recognized Horizon Utilities for a number of achievements including:

- **Operational Excellence**
 - A rate reduction for customers that averaged 2.3% (2006)
 - 80% of calls to the Customer Care Centre are answered in 30 seconds
 - Experienced a 23% reduction in power outages (2006)
 - Scored 84% on Customer Service Satisfaction Survey results - highest ever
 - Successfully installed 8,500 smart meters in 2006 as a pilot program in preparation for the installation of an additional 50,000 smart meters in 2007

- **Financial Operations**
 - Generated over \$5 million in annual savings
 - Invested \$16.4 million to upgrade and expand the electricity distribution networks in St. Catharines and Hamilton (2005)

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- **Occupational Health and Safety**
 - An exceptional **health and safety** record. In 2006, Horizon received two awards from the Electrical and Utilities Safety Association for 250,000 and 500,000 hours without a lost time incident.
 - Received a Healthy Workplace Certification from the National Quality Institute and a Healthy Living Gold Award from Healthy Living Niagara

- **Retail Strategies for Conservation and Demand Management**
 - In 2006, the Ministry of Energy requested a license to use Horizon's powerWISE® brand in its province-wide television and print advertising for energy conservation.
 - Horizon implemented a wide variety of energy conservation programs for the public including room air conditioner and refrigerator recycling programs, energy audits for small businesses, peaksaver™ programmable thermostats for peak load reduction, energy conservation backpacks for Grades 5 and 6 students, and free distribution of 49,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs and 8,800 energy efficient night lights.

- **Contribution to the Community**
 - Niagara Regional Housing Authority - provided funding to replace inefficient appliances with modern, energy efficient models.
 - Conducted an energy survey in low-income neighbourhoods in Hamilton
 - Worked diligently with the City of Hamilton to assist tenants whose utility bills are included in their monthly rent payments and who were in danger of being disconnected due to non-payment of the utility bill by the landlord.
 - Assisted local police forces in their efforts to reduce graffiti
 - Worked closely with municipal Social Service caseworkers, Canada Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program and Share the Warmth to help customers experiencing difficulty paying their electricity bills obtain assistance.
 - Provided electrical safety and energy conservation programs for 11,350 Kindergarten to Grade 8 students

About Horizon Utilities Corporation

Horizon Utilities Corporation is the third largest municipally owned electricity distribution company in Ontario and provides electricity and related utility services to over 230,000 residential and commercial customers in Hamilton and St. Catharines. The company is owned by Hamilton Utilities Corporation and St. Catharines Hydro Inc. and operates out of facilities in Hamilton, St. Catharines, and Stoney Creek.

Horizon's 350 employees are committed to delivering a safe and reliable supply of electricity, providing unparalleled customer value, and helping to create a culture of energy conservation in Ontario.

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