



Media Release

HORIZON HOLDINGS PUBLISHES ITS FIRST SUSTAINABILITY-BASED ANNUAL REPORT

Company is proud to be the first electricity distribution company in Ontario to submit to the international standard for sustainability reporting

HAMILTON / ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, June 9, 2009 – Horizon Holdings Inc., the parent company of Horizon Utilities Corporation and Horizon Energy Solutions Inc., is proud to present its first sustainability-based Annual Report, available for viewing online under the Sustainability section at: www.horizonutilities.com.

As the holding company of one of Ontario's largest and best performing electricity distribution companies, Horizon Holdings is acutely aware of the trust placed in the company by the communities it serves. More than 230,000 Horizon customers in Hamilton and St. Catharines benefit directly from low rates and a safe and reliable supply of electricity, as well as indirectly from dividends paid to the company's municipal shareholders – the cities of Hamilton and St. Catharines.

This year, by combining traditional financial reporting with a review of the organization's economic, social and environmental achievements, Horizon Holdings is demonstrating its commitment to contributing to the development of sustainable communities and a culture of energy conservation.

"Our commitment to sustainability balances social, environmental and economic considerations without sacrificing economic performance," states Max Cananzi, President & CEO of Horizon Holdings Inc. "We believe that embedding sustainable practices into our normal business routines will not only benefit our customers, the communities we serve, and the environment, but will also improve our economic performance and long-term prospects for success."

Horizon Holdings' goal is to be a leader in sustainable development – development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

"Growing our business sustainably, improving performance, and responding successfully to the new business opportunities presented by Ontario's Green Energy and Economy Act are the goals we have set to be a leader in the energy sector," says Cananzi.

In support of this goal, the Horizon Holdings Inc. Sustainability-Based Annual Report adheres to the Global Reporting Initiative™ (GRI) Sustainability Reporting Framework, a framework that has been embraced internationally. "We believe we are the first electric utility in Ontario to submit to the rigorous Global Reporting Initiative," says Cananzi.

Sustainability reports based on the GRI Sustainability Reporting Framework can be used to benchmark organizational performance with respect to laws, norms, codes, performance standards and voluntary initiatives; demonstrate organizational commitment to sustainable development; and compare organizational performance over time.

The Horizon Holdings Sustainability-Based Annual Report outlines the company’s newly adopted Sustainability Policy (see backgrounder) and highlights the company’s activities in:

- Employee relations and development
- Customer satisfaction
- Energy conservation and demand management
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Smart growth, smart meters and smart grids
- Preparing for a “green” economy and “green” jobs
- Public education on electrical safety and energy conservation
- Providing economic value to communities
- Corporate governance

Feedback on the report is welcomed at: sustainability@horizonutilities.com

Hard copies may also be ordered using the same email address.

About Horizon Holdings Inc. and Horizon Utilities Corporation

Horizon Holdings Inc. is the parent company of Horizon Utilities Corporation, one the largest municipally owned electricity distribution companies in Ontario, delivering electricity and related utility services to more than 230,000 residential and commercial customers in Hamilton and St. Catharines.

For more information, visit: www.horizonutilities.com.

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Backgrounder #1 – Horizon Holdings Inc. – Sustainability Policy

Backgrounder #2 – The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

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BACKGROUNDER #1

Horizon Holdings Inc. Sustainability Policy

Horizon Holdings' Sustainability Policy sets forth the company's commitment to protecting the health, safety, environment and well-being of employees and contractors, customers, and the communities in which the company operates.

Safety

The safety of our employees, contractors, customers, and the public is paramount. We will continually strive to meet and exceed all legal safety requirements. We will not undertake any activity without proper safety procedures and equipment being in place.

Environmental Responsibility

We will work to minimize our impact on the environment and seek to continually improve our environmental performance. We will work to reduce waste, emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants, and undertake to manage hazardous materials in a manner that meets or exceeds all government requirements. We will work with stakeholders to resolve land use conflicts in ways that protect the environment.

Economic Performance

Our success depends on the success of our customers and communities. We will return dividends to our shareholders that are consistent with ensuring sufficient investment for the provision of ongoing innovative and cost-effective energy products and services at competitive rates to our customers in the communities we serve.

Doing Business Ethically

We will meet or exceed all applicable laws and regulations relevant to our areas of business activity in the jurisdictions in which we operate. We will continue to implement and maintain ethical business practices and sound systems of corporate governance. We will not tolerate harassment or discrimination in any of our relationships, whether with employees, contractors, customers, or other stakeholders.

Our Employees

Our employees are Horizon's ambassadors to our customers and the communities we serve. We will provide employees with development opportunities in a safe, healthy and satisfying working environment. We will encourage the participation of employees in the continual improvement of our health, safety, environmental and social performance, and in the development of new and innovative energy products and services to our customers.

Managing Risk

We will meet or exceed all health, safety, and environmental regulatory requirements. We will evaluate the economic, social, and environmental risks of our business and take precautionary actions to address them. We will incorporate health, safety, environmental and social considerations into our business decisions.

Our Communities

Our activities reach far and wide into the communities that we serve. The supply of energy products and services represents a major contribution to the health and well-being of our customers and their communities. We will actively participate in the social, economic, and institutional development of the communities in which we operate. We will engage our stakeholders through open and transparent consultation and verifiable public reporting of our sustainability performance.

BACKGROUNDER #2

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Horizon Holdings constantly evaluates performance against specific regulatory requirements, sector standards, business goals and best practices, and public and shareholder expectations. The company also maintain a strong corporate-wide performance focus on safety, reliability, social responsibility, and employee and customer satisfaction.

But it is clear that society is now asking for more — for companies to practice sustainable development.


Through Horizon’s adoption of a Sustainability Policy, the company has established a new and more robust performance requirement. With the publication of our 2008 Sustainability-Based Annual Report, and our first formal annual report, we believe we will be the first local utility company in Ontario to measure and report performance under the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework. (See www.globalreporting.org).

The cornerstone of the GRI framework is its Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, which emphasize a triple bottom line approach to performance reporting — meaning an examination of social, environmental and economic factors. The aim in committing to the GRI standard is to continuously improve business practices and bring added value to all of Horizon’s stakeholders. This provides a framework for internalizing core sustainable development values. In the full GRI report — an online companion to the annual report — Horizon has addressed all of the GRI G3 Performance Indicators, the Electric Utility Sector Supplement Indicators, the “management approach” for the GRI Indicator Categories, and has responded to each G3 Indicator individually with due regard to the G3 “Materiality Principle.”

The 2008 Sustainability-Based Annual Report is a review of Horizon’s challenges and achievements in 2008. The full GRI filing is available at: www.horizonutilities.com.

Horizon’s GRI Filing

Following the GRI criteria, and its report application levels (see diagram), Horizon has self-declared our first GRI report filing at the “B” application level.

		2002 In Accordance	C	C+	B	B+	A	A+
Optional	Mandatory	Self Declared						
		Third Party Checked		Report Externally Assured		Report Externally Assured		Report Externally Assured
		GRI Checked						

GRI's Sustainability Metrics

In completing a GRI sustainability report, a company needs to address this group of issues.

GRI Metric	GRI Issues to be Addressed
Economic	Financial performance, market presence, economic impact
Environmental	Materials, energy, water, biodiversity, emissions
Labour Practices and Decent Work	Employment, labour relations, occupational health and safety, training and education, equal opportunity
Human Rights	Investment and procurement practices, non-discrimination, collective bargaining, forced and child labour, indigenous people
Society	Community, corruption, public policy, anti-competitive behaviours
Product Responsibility	Customer health and safety, labeling, communications, privacy

The Horizon 2008 Sustainability-Based Annual Report contains the company vision and reporting on the three main sustainability emphases — social performance, environmental performance and economic performance.

The Sustainability-Based Annual Report, financial statements and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) filing can be accessed online under the Sustainability section on the Horizon Utilities Corporation website at: www.horizonutilities.com.