



## Blackout Day Challenge brings unexpected results

**August 15, 2008** – Despite the efforts of residents and businesses, St. Catharines saw an increase in energy consumption and peak demand during yesterday's Blackout Day Challenge.

Using a template provided by the Independent Electricity System Operator, Horizon Utilities compared yesterday's energy consumption between noon and 8 p.m. with last year's figures and against historical data for days with similar weather over the past five years.

The calculations determined energy consumption increased by 1 per cent and peak demand increased by 1.8 per cent.

"Certainly this is not the result we had hoped for. People often do not think of energy consumption when the weather is cooler, so this result was always a possibility, said Mayor Brian McMullan "While the local results are disappointing, I think the Blackout Day Challenge provided us with an excellent opportunity to discuss the importance of energy conservation with residents. I'm hopeful next year we can make strides to reduce our energy consumption."

Possible factors for the results include weather, additional customers when compared to last year and residents choosing to remain home instead of going out of town on vacation due to increasing gas prices.

"Although the results were a little disappointing, we know people are conserving energy in their homes," reported Sandy Manners, Director of Corporate Communications for Horizon Utilities. "In fact, more than 42,000 of our residential customers received a rebate on their electricity bill last year for reducing their energy consumption by 10% last summer. More than 2,000 people have also called to have their "beer fridge" picked up for free and recycled under our Great Refrigerator Roundup Program."

Of course, businesses use a lot more energy than the average household. Horizon Utilities is currently concentrating efforts on helping businesses reduce their energy bills. "Many small businesses don't realize that there are incentive and rebate programs out there to help them pay for replacing lighting, upgrading air conditioning or heating units, and retrofitting motors for high-efficiency units," said Manners. Information on these and other energy conservation programs is available by calling 1-866-458-1236 or visiting: [www.horizonutilities.com](http://www.horizonutilities.com)

The Blackout Day Challenge was issued by Woodstock Mayor Michael Harding and challenged Ontario communities to reduce their consumption to mark the massive power system failure of August 14, 2003. This was the first year the City of St. Catharines participated in the challenge.

Results for all participating communities will not be known until September.

-30-

Contact:

Mayor Brian McMullan  
905-688-5600 ext 1540  
905-328-8907 (cell)

Sandy Manners  
Director of Corporate Communications  
Horizon Utilities Corporation  
905-317-4707  
905-308-1473 (cell)

Email: [sandy.manners@horizonutilities.com](mailto:sandy.manners@horizonutilities.com)