

Climate Network Lanark



Hello Friend,

You last read a newsletter from us before the Holidays, so we hope you had a relaxing time with friends and family.

Are you enjoying this mild winter? If yes, make sure you don't forget that it's only mild because of climate change - and mild winters are not always a good thing. Weather will continue to worsen if we don't stand up and fight for the environment. Read below to see how CNL is tackling these latest climate issues.

Thank you to everyone who donated during our donation campaign. Using various funding streams has allowed us to move to a [brand-new website](#) and supporter system to better suit the community's needs. We'd like to mention again that due to the new system we're using, those who were unsubscribed are now subscribed again. Please use the unsubscribe button at the bottom if you wish to unsubscribe again.

Our projects wouldn't be possible without your support and we will be forever grateful for that. If you'd like to donate to CNL, please use the Donate button at the bottom.

- The CNL Team

County Proceeding with Better Homes Lanark Application

Lanark County Council has approved contributing \$5 million from reserves as the capital contribution for the Better Homes Lanark (BHL) Program under the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Community Efficiency Financing (CEF) Program. It also authorized staff to prepare and submit the CEF application. BHL is a home energy financing program that ties into the county's Climate Action Plan.

Carleton Place Environmental Advisory Committee and CNL

The Carleton Place Environmental Advisory Committee (CPEAC) put together an event titled “**Greening Your Home: How to save money and help the planet.**” It will cover everything from heat pumps, home energy audits and retrofits, and how to get rebates. This **free event** is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to reduce their home energy bills or thinking about updating their heating and cooling systems.

There will be three presenters. Malanie Johnston, Director of Energy Programs from Envirocentre, Tom Duglosz, an HVAC specialist and owner of Comfort Pro, and CNL's Sadie Brule.

The event will take place on February 21, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Bob Rintoul Hall at the Neelin Street Community Centre (arena). **The event is now sold out but a recording may be available after!**

CNL's New Website and Management System

As part of our **Community Mobilized for Local Climate Action** project, we have transitioned to a new website to better suit both CNL's vision and the community's interests. This project will help us engage community participation in grassroots projects that reduce greenhouse gases and address climate adaptation. As we began creating our new website to better reflect our work in the community, we realized that we needed a new, better way to keep in touch! We have updated our data management software so we can better tailor our communications to you as much as possible. Expect an email regarding this topic in a few weeks! There also may be a chance to win a gift card, so keep an eye out!

County Planners and Wetlands

On February 1st, CNL co-hosted a workshop held in the Lanark County building for County Planners and Conservation Authorities (CAs). This workshop followed on a key gathering CNL hosted a year ago that brought together regional organizations

working on wetlands. The meeting identified the need to bring all planners up to date on the status of wetland protection in Lanark County. There was great energy in the room, the participants brought themselves up to date and shared a desire for greater collaboration on certain aspects between the CAs, the municipalities, and the County.

This meeting was efficient and productive - planners working with other planners! There was a good understanding of each other and their daily work and challenges.

One of our focuses at CNL is Nature-Based Climate Solutions, and this meeting offered insight and clarity into a Summit CNL has in the works for Wetlands in the Spring. More details about our upcoming Summit and the purpose of it will be announced later!

Climate Concierge: Successful Pilot Informs New Fall Project

At the end of February, Climate Concierge's pilot program is set to end. This revolutionary initiative has had a very positive impact on the residents of Lanark County.

"I have a lot of climate anxiety," says Sara of the second Almonte Cluster. "One way I have learned to manage that is to feel like I am contributing to a solution. Thus, not only has this group been a great way to learn more about retrofitting my home and decreasing my carbon footprint, it has allowed me to meet like-minded people and feel like I am contributing."

These small groups of homeowners have gotten together once a month over the past six months to discuss alternative solutions to heating and cooling their homes, navigate the available [financing programs](#), and recommend local [tradespeople](#) (both of which can be viewed on CNL's [website](#)). The program has yielded very positive results. 79% of participants who fully completed the program had an energy audit completed for their home, and over half were ready to install heat pumps. Not only that, but participants left feeling more confident, knowledgeable, and willing to spread the word about their newfound expertise.

"I highly recommend this group concept for anyone considering reducing their carbon footprint and taking advantage of existing programs," says Art. "I feel confident knowing that having others and advisors to discuss options, not based on any commercial benefit, is an invaluable tool."

Climate Concierge **will return in the fall/winter of 2024.**

Electrify Lanark Forum: A New CNL Series

CNL is pleased to announce that we will be hosting a series of workshops throughout the Spring and Fall on electrifying your home, and a major forum in May

that will take a preliminary look at what Lanark residents need to do locally to provide the electric power required to electrify our lives and get off fossil fuels.

Thanks to the support from the Perth and District Community Foundation, we are developing a set of 7 workshops that we will deliver around the County, in the towns and virtually so that everyone can benefit from the expertise and knowledge these workshops will provide. The workshops will focus on outdoor activities and equipment, solar photovoltaics, electric vehicles, bikes and chargers, hot water heating systems, heat pumps, home resiliency (and how to avoid a panel upgrade), and indoor appliances and induction stoves.

For the May 18th Electrify Lanark Forum, we plan to bring in speakers who can address the bigger issues of how we might generate, store, and distribute electricity locally, touching on distributed power, solar farms, utility-scale batteries, making full use of EV batteries, and back-up power.

Speakers will include Steve Lapp (who spoke at CNL's founding gathering 4 years ago), the Ottawa Renewable Energy Corp., Ralph Torrie from Corporate Knights, and the IESO.

More information on how to reserve your space for the workshops and forum will be announced in the next newsletter and on our social media. If anyone would like to volunteer expertise or to help with this Electrify Lanark project, please complete the volunteer form on our [website](#). **When completing the form, please select "Live Events" as an interest.**



CNL was recently featured in the Perth and District Community Foundation's [Winter Newsletter](#).

County Committed to Urban Transportation

Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls have set aside \$30,000 in their combined budgets to help pay for a feasibility study into rural transportation options for the residents of our County. The federal government recently re-opened the Planning and Design Stream of the Rural Transit Solutions Fund to assist municipalities wishing to engage in this type of feasibility study. Lanark Rural Transportation Working Group is in the process of assisting Lanark County with an application for this grant.

End of Greener Homes: February 29th, 2024

The federal government has announced the end of the Greener Homes/HER+ program earlier than intended because of its overwhelming success. People already in the system will be able to finish and be able to take advantage of the \$5,000 grant. The Greener Homes loan program, providing up to \$40,000 interest-free over 10 years is still open for applicants. More than half a million Canadian homes will have benefitted from the program when it concludes. Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson said a new replacement program could offer more generous grants and may not require applicants to spend the money upfront.

It will offer supports "that are more accessible" to homes "with low-to-median incomes. ... We are readying the next phase of the Canada Greener Homes Initiative to offer more accessible support to families across the country who need it most while continuing to take action on climate change"

The Eco-Friendly Snowmobile!

Be among the first to take their brand new, state-of-the-art electric Ski-Doo on a tour of a lifetime! Eco-friendly, silent and fast, your one-hour guided tour on the trails of Montebello, Quebec, will be unlike anything you've experienced before.

[Check them out here.](#)

Volunteer of the Month: Rick Edwards



After earning my Masters Degree at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, my wife Elisabeth and I purchased the Naismith House and moved to Almonte in 2002. We initially opened an antiques store in the Victoria Woolen Mill and operated it for about six years while I applied for my citizenship papers (USA born).

Shortly thereafter, I began work as a project manager for a couple multi-media start ups, then with a large engineering firm, with increasing experience with the federal government in Ottawa. I have been with my current firm, Tiree, for almost twelve years working exclusively with PWGSC where I prepare budgets, risk management plans, life cycle costing analyses, and approval documentation for projects in the 35 buildings of the Parliamentary Precinct. During that time, I have

obtained a few industry credentials (project management, risk management, and LEED) and taught Sustainable Project Management (with related courses) in the Green Architecture Program at Algonquin College for ten years.

I happily endorse the work of CNL because a societal shift toward greener technologies or methodologies needs to happen at the local level. I think we have all noticed the reluctance of giant corporations (with massive carbon footprints) to make changes that impact their profits, even if those changes could help save the planet or forestall tipping points. And federal or provincial lawmakers have a similar reluctance to introduce or support legislation that impacts existing industries for fear of job losses and subsequent loss of votes. So, even though the handwriting regarding climate change has been on the wall for seventy years, it may not surprise us that human nature resists any modifications that adversely affect comfort, profit, or lifestyle. For all our advanced

intelligence, we humans are shockingly poor planners for the future beyond our own individual interests.

That leaves us with possible action at the local level where we still have direct person-to-person contact with elected officials, area businesses, and homeowners that can make better choices that protect our environment and build smarter infrastructure.

The “passion” I feel about climate change issues is mostly about responsibility and stewardship. My single-parent mother tried to teach me to take responsibility for my actions, often at the scene of something I had just broken. I was a poor student of her instruction then, but I may have progressed a little in recent years. So, I try to understand my small role in impacting the environment and implement necessary changes that could produce good results. Also, as a person of faith, I believe I am a temporary steward of resources entrusted to me. As such, I want to treat my “space” on earth with the same careful and loving consideration I would give a prized possession in my home.

For our part, Lissie and I try to reduce, reuse, and recycle (amazing how that phrase endures!) everything from extra food, household items, and clothing to building materials (and heartily recommend the Hub, Rebound, The Hunger Stop, and ReStore).

We compost our food scraps with Just Good Compost, cut back on electrical use where possible, and walk about town for most of our errands. We absolutely love Almonte and find it a wonderful place to live.

Encouraging Electrification of Homes and the Elimination of Fossil Fuels

An update on CNL's actions to encourage electrification of homes and elimination of fossil fuels, specifically fossil gas.

As reported previously, CNL joined with Environmental Defence and the Ontario Clean Air Alliance in a complaint to the federal Competition Board about Enbridge's misleading marketing information on natural gas.

Just before Christmas, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB), which regulates energy utilities and prices in Ontario, issued an earth-shaking decision. According to The Narwhal, "Saying fossil fuel use will decline, the OEB told Enbridge Gas to charge developers, not homeowners, for new natural gas hookups."

Historically, the cost of extending natural gas infrastructure to new homes was amortized over 40 years and was borne by homeowners in the capital cost of the house. But, the OEB decided, to quote the Narwhal again: "First, that climate change is forcing an energy transition that will likely make natural gas essentially useless, or "a stranded asset" — financially unviable or socially unacceptable as lower emissions energy sources increase and improve. Second, that "the usual way of doing business is not sustainable. The board found there was enough evidence to show homeowners would move away from natural gas sooner than later, and Enbridge Gas had not made "meaningful consideration" of this transition or the government climate change commitments behind it....government timelines to achieve emissions reductions are shorter: Ontario's goal is to lower emissions to 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, which is seven years away, while the federal government is pushing for net-zero emissions by 2050, which is 27 years away. ... "This is not logical," the board said. In fact, it wrote, this outlook is harmful to customers, since homeowners would first pay to be hooked up to gas, then again to install new, cleaner connections such as heat pumps."

To read the whole Narwhal story go here <https://thenarwhal.ca/ontario-energy-board-enbridge-gas/>

The Ontario Minister of Energy, Todd Smith, virtually immediately vowed to bring in legislation to overturn the OEB decision. And Enbridge is appealing the OEB decision to Ontario's Divisional Court.

CNI endorsed the Environmental Defence letter to the Minister, encouraging him to support the OEB decision: Here is the [link: https://www.cleanairalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Letter-Re-OEB-Decision.pdf](https://www.cleanairalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Letter-Re-OEB-Decision.pdf)

Numerous organizations, including LEADNOW, are asking citizens to sign onto a petition supporting the OEB decision so we can have clean heating choices in Ontario. [Sign the petition here.](#)

We Need Your Support

Do you want to act, but don't think you can make a difference in the climate fight?

CNL wants to continue to grow our reach in the community. We have been working hard to expand our projects since we started four years ago. But to keep going, **we need your help!**

CNL **relies on YOU** in order to keep pushing for climate action in Lanark County. We need stable staff positions, and to do that we need stable funding. Projects that we are excited to expand may be stalled when we don't have a stable funding base. We would love for you to consider helping in any way you can. Please consider becoming a **monthly donor** and join the movement!

We offer **charitable receipts** for your donation through our partnership with the Salal Foundation. Monthly donors receive an annual receipt in time for tax season.

Donate Today



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