

MEDIA RELEASE



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Town of Banff's solar program wins prestigious Emerald award for innovation

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Banff, AB – The Town of Banff's Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Production Incentive was recognized June 8 by the Alberta Emerald Foundation at the 25th Annual Emerald Awards, which celebrate outstanding environmental achievements across all sectors in Alberta.

Banff's program won in the Emerald Challenge: Innovation category, which recognizes individuals or organizations who develop new methods, ideas or products that positively impact the environment, and ground-breaking concepts that will be a catalyst for growth and success.

Banff became the first municipality in Canada last year to offer a production incentive (feed-in tariff) for solar PV systems. Property owners who apply and qualify for the program make the initial investment to install the solar system, then receive a production-based top-up payment over the next seven years.

"This is an incredibly successful program and we're thrilled to be recognized by the Alberta Emerald Foundation," said Banff Mayor Karen Sorensen. "Council saw the benefits of investing in a program unique in Canada that would encourage residents to install solar panels on their homes and businesses. As a community, we strive to be an environmental role model and I'm proud of how well this has been received."

Energy consumption from the grid is Banff's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. In the first year of this program, Banff saw over 100kW of new solar PV systems installed on homes, multi-family units and businesses. With the town's previously installed solar systems on Town Hall, public washrooms and Banff Community High School, Banff generates 21 watts of solar PV per person, more than 16 times the Alberta average.

"The community really responded to this program and made a big step towards embracing renewable energy," said Banff's Environmental Services Coordinator Chad Townsend. "We're grateful for the recognition of this award, and hope the success of this program encourages other municipalities, or even the province, to look at creating a production incentive for solar power."

In 2015, 47 applications were received for the Solar PV Production Incentive and 16 properties were selected through a lottery system. The application process has closed for 2016, but the town will begin accepting applications again in early 2017.

For more information about the Town of Banff's solar program, visit banff.ca/solar.

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