

Brantford Power brings Safety Children's Safety

Brantford Power has brought elementary age and post-secondary students together in a unique project that ties together two major public education initiatives - safety and energy conservation. The utility celebrated Energy Conservation Week in May by donating a miniature, solar-powered vehicle, dubbed the "Sun Buggy," to the Children's Safety Village of Brant.

The bright green solar powered vehicle, designed by students and instructors at Mohawk College's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, boasts a solar collection system on its roof. It's the latest addition to the Village's fleet of child-sized electric vehicles.

The Sun Buggy is just the first phase of Brantford Power's "Greening the Village" initiative - and the latest example of the distribution utility's ongoing support for the facility where children learn the fundamentals of safety and awareness.

"We have been enthusiastic supporters of the Children's Safety Village since 2005," says John Loucks, Brantford Power's Chief Operating Officer. "We are now working with our partners at Mohawk College on a solar electric installation to power all of the more than 30 miniature electric vehicles in use at the Village." The Safety Village is designed to look like a city-in-miniature, and the solar fleet is intended to make it look like a City of the not-too-distant future.

Special guests at the buggy's unveiling on May 20 were children who entered Brantford Power's "Paint It Green" conservation poster contest. Contest winner, Julia Jukes from Ryerson Heights School, received special recognition and her picture was featured on a conservation-oriented t-shirt. The contest received 173 entries from children at six local schools.

Brantford Mayor Mike Hancock said he was proud of the leadership role taken by Brantford Power in its conservation initiatives. "It's an example of a progressive organization," he said.

"Mohawk College is proud to put students and faculty from our School of Engineering Technology to work with Brantford Power in greening the Children's Safety Village of Brant," said Mohawk College President Rob MacIsaac. "Our partnership creates a one-of-a-kind classroom that helps transform our students into graduates with the skills and experience to take on the green collar jobs of the future."



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The bright green solar powered vehicle is the latest addition to the Safety Village's fleet of child-sized electric vehicles. (Photo courtesy of Brantford Power)

Each year close to 10,000 Brantford area children - elementary students, Brownies, Girl Guides, Cubs, Scouts, church groups and day camps - visit the Safety Village, originally the brainchild of the Kiwanis Club of Brantford which was partly inspired by statistics showing that hospitalization rates for injuries and poisonings in Brant County were higher than the provincial average.

Located on a two-acre site on land donated by Mohawk College, the village provides a practical hands-on, interactive approach to safety education for close to 10,000 Brantford area children each year.

The miniature town is complete with sidewalks, roadways, street signs, traffic lights, stop signs and a working railway crossing so that children can practise the skills they have learned. The children navigate their way through the village by foot, on bicycles or on the fleet of runabouts.

and Conservation together at Village

Walk through the village and you come across a kite and a pair of running shoes dangling from overhead power lines next to a miniature substation. They are there, of course, to illustrate an important safety lesson from Brantford Power about the dangers of approaching the lines.

Programs range from basic fire safety training to traffic and bicycle safety, home alone safety, Internet safety, street proofing and bullying. All activities are taught and supervised by qualified police officers and fire prevention officers.

Doug DeLaronde, President of the Board of Directors of the Children's Safety Village said "we appreciate Brantford Power's involvement and ongoing support, and we look forward to working with them on further "greening" projects in the Village."

Brantford Power is involved in both regular programming and special events at the village. Providing Public Education and Public Safety initiatives is a regulatory requirement for distribution utilities under the OEB Distribution System Code, and a commitment stated in Brantford Power's Mission, Vision and Values.

Among the other initiatives at the village sponsored by Brantford Power:

- For a third year Brantford Power was the major sponsor of the Kid's Street Festival at the Village in June. Approximately 2,000 people attend the event.
- Brantford Power participates in a Halloween Trick-or-Treat day in October with a focus on Halloween safety. The event attracts an estimated 1,500 attendees.
- Brantford Power contributes advertising to Christmas in the Village, held in December each year. The three-day event had an estimated attendance of 2,500. Brantford Power has also contributed energy-efficient LED lighting.
- Brantford Power sponsors a Children's Safety Activity Book, provided at the Village and in its Customer Services area. Two editions of 32,000 copies of the publication have been produced.

"We believe that children can be leaders in creating a culture of conservation, and in promoting safety within families" Loucks says, "and there is no better place we know of to reach elementary age students than Children's Safety Village."

A portion of the budget for the Sun Buggy was provided from the Ontario Power Authority's Community Initiatives Fund.

More information on the Children's Safety Village may be found at www.csvbrant.ca. ■



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