

## THE SOLARBEE: A SOLAR SCI-FI FANTASY

**Innovative solar aerators reduce operating costs by drawing power from the sun and can have a payback period of less than 2 years.**

Looking like something out of a sci-fi fantasy, the SolarBee floats quietly in Drayton Valley's wastewater treatment pond. Drawing about 5,000 horsepower of 'free' energy from the sun, this solar aerator reduces greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), lowers maintenance time and is safer to operate and more effective than conventional aeration systems.



The SolarBee will save  
Drayton Valley \$130,000  
annually

Widely installed across the United States, the SolarBee is a floating, solar-powered circulator that gently re-aerates both fresh and wastewater ponds to accelerate the normal purification process.

With help from *ME first!*, an interest-free loan program for municipalities' energy efficiency projects, the Town of Drayton Valley is saving money and energy with the SolarBee.

"The process of ordering and installing the SolarBee was painless," says Darcy Bryant, Drayton Valley's manager of utilities and eco-efficiency. "Although the winter makes it difficult to track the benefits of this machine, we are confident of the results we will see come spring."

Under *ME first!*, an Alberta government energy efficiency program administered by Climate Change Central, Drayton Valley received an interest-free loan to install the SolarBee. Because the Town's project was the first of its kind in Alberta, Drayton Valley received additional interest-free funding for implementing an innovative technology.

"Technology that virtually eliminates the need for a conventional energy source is a great feat," says Fred Walter, Program Manager for Climate Change Central. "We're expecting more *ME first!* applications for the SolarBee because of its adaptability to both urban and rural settings."

The SolarBee will save Drayton Valley \$130,000 annually in energy and maintenance costs and pay for itself in less than two years. According to Martine Pawlowski of H2O Logics, the regional distributor for the SolarBee, additional benefits include greater water clarity and aquatic weed control and reduced odour and fish kills.

"*ME first!* funding is getting people to brainstorm projects they can do to save money and invest it back into the community," says Bryant. With these savings Drayton Valley plans to invest in other energy efficiency projects. "A more sustainable Drayton Valley is our goal."

### RELATED LINKS

**ME *first!***

**H2O Logics Inc.**

**Energy Solutions Alberta**

<http://www.climatechangecentral.com/mefirst/>

<http://www.h2ologics.com/>

<http://www.energysolutionsalberta.com/>