

Keep weather eye on energy use

Power data moves to popular website Province wants aware consumers

Nov. 17, 2006. 01:00 AM

[TYLER HAMILTON](#)

ENERGY REPORTER

Ontarians are obsessed with the weather.

So in a province that wants consumers to be more in tune with their day-to-day energy use, the plan of action appears obvious: Hop into bed with The Weather Network.

The Independent Electricity System Operator, which balances electricity supply and demand in the province, has worked out a deal that will see hourly updates of power use in Ontario available online at theweathernetwork.com.

Terry Young, spokesman for the system operator, said there's a direct connection between the weather and energy consumption, so it made sense to blend both pieces of information.

In the summer, even small increases in temperature can lead to millions of air conditioners running harder and longer, putting a greater strain on the electricity system.

In fact, inside the system operator's central control room, The Weather Network channel is almost always featured on a massive screen so employees can monitor the weather 24 hours a day.

"We're constantly looking at what the weather is going to be, because it has such an impact on demand," Young said. "The analogy we use is one degree of temperature change represents 400 megawatts."

He compared that to the amount of electricity a city the size of Brampton might require. "This partnership is a way for people to see the kinds of demands on the system and to help them take action."

The data isn't new. A range of information is already available on the system operator's corporate site, including projections of peak electricity demand, hourly market prices and up-to-date reports on where the province is getting its power.

But most Ontario consumers aren't aware of the site, let alone the system operator. The challenge for the organization was to find an avenue where more people could be exposed to the electricity data.

The Weather Network seemed a perfect fit. The site gets about 5 million unique visitors each year, about a third coming from Ontario.

"They approached us and asked if we'd be interested," said Laurissa Anyas-Weiss, a spokesperson for The Weather Network. "We were thrilled."

Investment Links

[Today's markets](#)

[Stock quotes](#)

[Mutual fund quotes](#)

[Portfolio manager](#)

[Bill Carrigan](#)

[James Daw](#)

[David Olive](#)

[Ellen Roseman](#)

Stock List

Follow your [stocks](#) and [funds](#) with our new watchlists, powered by Morningstar (reg. required).

Tag and Save

[Tag and save](#) this article to your Del.icio.us favourites.

[What is Del.icio.us?](#)

POWERED BY  del.icio.us

She said the information will become more useful to consumers as Ontario moves toward smart meters, giving homeowners and businesses more control over when they use electricity and how much they pay.

The network also plans to run advisories from the system operator, such as calls for conservation during times of crisis or extreme weather. Eventually, the idea is to combine the information with weather data as part of a desktop application.

"Our plan is to increasingly integrate this type of data into the pages, so you'll see that in the future," Anyas-Weiss said.

And Ontario is just the start. The network is in discussions with other provinces to get their electricity system data as well.

The McGuinty government's goal is to reduce electricity demand in the province by 6,300 megawatts by 2025, partly by promoting a culture of conservation. The hope is that this culture can be more easily nurtured if energy users understand the close relationship between electricity consumption and weather patterns.

[Additional articles by Tyler Hamilton](#)



[Get great home delivery subscription deals here!](#)

[FAQs](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Webmaster](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [My Subscription](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Webmaking Blog](#)

[Home](#) | [GTA](#) | [Business](#) | [Waymoresports](#) | [A&E](#) | [Life](#)

Legal Notice: Copyright Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. All rights reserved. Distribution, transmission or republication of any material from www.thestar.com is strictly prohibited without the prior written permission of Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. For information please contact us using our [webmaster form](#). www.thestar.com online since 1996.

