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Communiqué de presse

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THE AGENCE DE L'EFFICACITÉ ÉNERGÉTIQUE FACILITATES THE AQUISITION OF DOMESTIC SOLAR WATER HEATERS

Québec City, Monday, June 22, 2009. – Using the sun's energy to heat domestic water is now a real possibility! Today, Québec's Agence de l'efficacité énergétique launched a pilot project facilitating the acquisition of domestic solar water heaters.

"Thanks to this pilot project, the use of solar energy is becoming a reality for Québec families. We're taking another step towards increasing the use of this type of clean and renewable energy. At the same time, we're continuing to make energy efficiency a priority in Québec" declared Luce Asselin, the AEE President and Executive Director.

How Do Domestic Solar Water Heaters Work?

A domestic solar water heater is a thermal system that uses the sun's energy to heat water in a house. Solar collectors are usually installed on a south-facing roof. They can also be installed on a wall, or simply on a tripod planted in the ground. They absorb the sun's energy and convert it to heat.

A thermal solar water heater does not generate electricity. This is a system that harnesses solar energy and sends it, in the form of heat, to a heat transfer fluid. Solar energy preheats domestic water in the storage tank before it is transferred to the adjacent existing water heater. Cold water therefore no longer supplies the traditional water heater, but rather hot water from the solar storage tank! The traditional water heater steps in as an additional heating system to finish bringing the water up to the operating temperature (60 ºC) as needed.

The system usually includes

- one or more solar collectors (commonly called solar panels)
- a hot water storage tank
- a heat exchanger
- insulated piping

Savings on the Energy Bill!

Every day, there are multiple uses for hot water in the home: shower, bath, dish washer, etc. A solar water heater can meet 60% of a family's hot water needs.

Water heating represents about 16% of a home's energy expenses. For example, for a house of approximately 140 m^2 (1 500 ft^2), energy consumption costs between $1,500 and $2,000 per year, $320 of which is related to hot water use. The acquisition of a solar water heater will allow consumers to reduce their energy bill by about $200 per year. This amount may vary with the type of energy used to heat the water.

"Since Québec has an excellent rate of sunlight hours, solar energy is available and renewable. We have every reason to use this form of energy", mentioned Luce Asselin.

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Major Financial Assistance

The pilot project for domestic solar water heaters is addressed to home owners or owners of small multiple-unit buildings (three floors or less, without a common entrance) located in Québec. This pilot project, which will continue until the end of 2010, will allow 600 Québec families to benefit from major financial assistance for the purchase and installation of a new domestic solar water heater.

The financial assistance offered by the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique is determined by the number of solar collectors installed. An investment of between $4,600 and $8,500 is usually required for the purchase and installation of a solar water heater system. Costs may vary according to the characteristics of the house, the number of occupants, the system chosen, the installer, etc.

	Financial Assistance
Water heater (1 collector)	$2,700
Water heater (2 collectors)	$3,750
Water heater (3 collectors)	$4,250

A solar collector is about 10 cm (4 in) thick, 1.2 m (4 ft) high, giving a total surface area of about 3 m^2 (32 ft^2). A family of three people would need about two solar collectors to meet their hot water needs.

To participate in this pilot project, simply contact the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique Call Centre at 1 866 266-0008. All of the details of the pilot project are available on line at www.aee.gouv.qc.ca/en/solar. Requests for financial assistance must be received by the AEE no later than October 31, 2010.

This pilot project was selected by Natural Resources Canada as part of the ecoENERGY for Renewable Heat program's Residential Pilot Initiative.

The mission of the Agence de l'efficacité énergétique is to promote energy efficiency and the development of new energy technologies for all sources of energy in all activity sectors, to the benefit of all of the citizens in the regions of Québec and with a perspective of sustainable development.

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