**Hitting for the Circuit with Clean Energy**

The floodlights around municipal ball diamonds are on almost every summer night in the Town of Saugeen Shores. Baseball, softball, slo-pitch: they’re all popular in this rapidly growing community on the eastern side of Lake Huron in Ontario, Canada (about 100 miles northwest of Toronto).

Those floodlights remain bright and humming because of the nearby Bruce Nuclear Generating Station, one of the world’s largest nuclear facilities. The site employs tens of thousands of workers -- and is attracting thousands more -- thanks to Bruce Power’s efforts to extend the life of its reactors. Many of those workers are experienced engineers and technicians who have called Saugeen Shores home, and many of them are active in the town’s leagues.

The balance between work and play is obvious to Saugeen Shores Mayor Luke Charbonneau. That’s why he and the town’s council saw an opportunity when a large piece of land became available: set aside part of it to build more diamonds, and then create a business park to build upon the area’s burgeoning **clean energy** industry.

“We are growing at a tremendous rate,” said Charbonneau. “It would be foolish not to tap into that expanding knowledge base of nuclear and clean energy workers who live here.”

Located on the south end, the municipality is building **Innovation Park**, a site offering up **17 lots on 23 acres of employment land**. The town wants to attract new and existing businesses that are at the heart of the clean energy industry – nuclear, hydrogen, solar – as well as the technology and research to go with it, such as the nascent development of medical isotopes. The goal is to offer up a campus where these businesses can not only thrive, but also collaborate and build something together.

The Town has connected the site to the essential underground infrastructure: water, hydro (naturally) and internet. It also has a **suite of municipal incentives** available to help businesses establish themselves in the park. Plus, the municipality is willing and able to go the extra mile.

“We’ve built up a lot of social capital and goodwill with various levels of government,” says Charbonneau. “I will always pick up the phone to advocate for clean energy.”

Charbonneau says the town has a close relationship with Bruce Power and there is constant dialogue between municipality and major employer. It also helps that Saugeen Shores is located in the **Clean Energy Frontier,** a region spread over three counties that hosts **more than 60 clean energy businesses**; 18 of those businesses are in Saugeen Shores alone. The Town is also home to the **Nuclear Innovation Institute**, an independent non-profit dedicated to accelerating innovation in the nuclear industry.

“As the world moves away from fossil fuels, we need to ramp up sources for low-carbon energy”, says Charbonneau. “The emergence of electric vehicles and the proliferation of mega servers means we need to find new and innovative ways to generate, store and transmit power. It’s actually very exciting.”

The mayor is quick to add there’s more to his community than just Bruce Power. For decades, the area has been a barely kept secret as a vacation paradise: close enough to “the city” to reach in an afternoon, yet far enough to avoid urban sprawl. The town has over 10 miles of pristine freshwater shoreline that continues to inspire photographers from all over. (Enter “Saugeen Shores” and “sunset” into your search engine. Trust us.) Throw in the pandemic and new remote technology and you have more and more people making the decision to settle down here.

Charbonneau: “A lot of communities like to talk about quality of life, but here we walk the talk… literally!”

The mayor is referring to the Rail Trail, an old railroad line adjacent to the Innovation Park that’s been converted into a 7.5-mile-long recreational trail that gets plenty of use from walkers, runners, cyclists, and cross-country skiers. On the other side of the site is the aforementioned ball diamonds: the brand-new Lamont Sports Park that will feature six baseball diamonds of varying sizes when completed. Down the road is MacGregor Provincial Park, and the town has also just committed to a new state-of-the-art, green $50-million Aquatic & Wellness Centre.

“We are doubling down on recreation, our natural environment and healthy, accessible lifestyles,” says Charbonneau. “It makes no sense for a community to promote clean energy while ignoring the other aspects of well-being.”

In many ways, the ball diamonds are a metaphor: for the sense of community when the teams come together, for the clean energy keeping the lights on, and for the political will to build and support major projects. The mayor has the same goals for the Innovation Park.

“This site is the start of something really special: a close community of energy innovators that feed off each other to spawn new connections, new ideas and new products. The town is going to ensure those businesses lead the way into a net-zero future.”

*If you want to establish your clean energy business in our Innovation Park, or would like more information, please reach out to:*

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