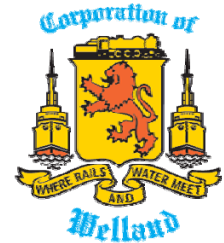




## MEDIA RELEASE



### Earth Hour Challenge Has Been Issued

~ March 28, 2009 – 8:30 to 9:30 pm ~

**For Release – March 24, 2009 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Welland** – The City of Welland and Welland Hydro has encouraged its staff to participate in Earth Hour since the initiative's inception in 2007, but that encouragement will be ramped up this year. Welland Hydro has issued a challenge to the City of Welland to see which corporation can amass the higher percentage of employees who sign up for and participate in Earth Hour 2009 at home.

The challenge issued by Welland Hydro to the City of Welland is, "One, we will gladly accept!" says City Manager, Craig Stirtzinger. "We encourage our staff to be as energy conscious as possible in the workplace and now that Welland Hydro has issued this friendly challenge to us, this will be a fun way to involve our families in being part of the energy solution", continued Stirtzinger.

With such an intense focus these days on the ways in which people can help the environment and conserve energy, participating in this one-hour event is a simple way for the entire community to get involved in the effort to reduce the City's carbon footprint.

Ross Peever, President and CEO of Welland Hydro, sees this challenge as an easy way to demonstrate to ourselves and others that we can turn electrical devices off with little impact on our level of comfort. "The inconvenience is often minor compared to the impact on the environment and the real cost of energy", states Peever.

"This green event is both fun and smart", says Councillor David Alexander, who sits on the City's Conservation Committee. "It is a great opportunity for people to make small changes in reducing their energy use, the money you pay for energy, and to think about how you can make a difference".

Before residents turn out their lights for Earth Hour this Saturday, Welland Fire & Emergency Services would like to remind residents to stock up on batteries for flashlights so they are prepared for an hour in the dark. If you chose to use candles or oil lanterns as a source of light during the one-hour light's-out event, please be sure that candles and lanterns are safely out of the reach of children and animals and that the proper holders are used so that flames are not exposed and most importantly do not leave burning candles or lanterns unattended.

"Our priority is to encourage fire safety at all times and especially during times when residents will be relying on other, potentially dangerous, sources of light", says Welland's Fire Chief Denys Prevost. "Welland Fire & Emergency services is fully supportive of this worthwhile initiative and is looking forward to seeing the successful outcome of Earth Hour – free of fire events", added Prevost.

Both Welland Hydro and the City of Welland have officially registered for Earth Hour and will be encouraging all staff at both organizations to follow suit in order to garner as much participation in this significant event as possible.

In 2008, the Environmental Club at Welland's École secondaire catholique Jean-Vanier made a presentation detailing their initiatives and efforts to increase awareness and participation for Earth Hour and conservation in general throughout the City. Those initiatives are being revived this year for Earth

Hour by the same Club through the efforts of its dedicated group of students and their teacher Michel Montpellier, with the assistance of the City of Welland Conservation Committee.

Councillor Paul Grenier, who is the Chair of the City of Welland Conservation Committee, is confident that Earth Hour will be more successful this year than last and hopes that all windows in Welland are darkened on Saturday, March 28 at 8:30 p.m. With children being educated earlier in life about the importance of conservation of energy and water, Earth Hour is a perfect time for families to get together and discuss the ways they can reduce their own carbon footprint.

“Participation in Earth Hour is an excellent way for families to understand their demand for electricity and find ways to reduce that demand, and I am confident that the many educational processes undertaken by the City, Hydro, and the Province, will help foster a better understanding of the importance of conservation”, says Councillor Grenier.

“This challenge is a friendly contest between two conservation partners”, says the rather confident Chair of Welland Hydro, Tim Clutterbuck, who is certain of one outcome of Earth Hour. “Even though this is a friendly contest, Welland Hydro is going to win this challenge!” declared Clutterbuck.

“No matter what Tim seems to think, I’m confident City of Welland employees will come out ahead in this friendly contest when all is said and done”, states Grenier.

“I’m glad Welland Hydro issued this friendly challenge; if nothing else, it will certainly increase the level of participation in Earth Hour, which is the outcome we both truly want to see”, Grenier notes.

For more information about Earth Hour or to sign up to participate on March 28, visit the global site at [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org). For the site specific to Earth Hour Canada, and an opportunity to have your name entered in a draw for a trip for two to Churchill, Manitoba, to see the majestic polar bears in their natural habitat, visit [www.wwf.ca/earthhour](http://www.wwf.ca/earthhour).

There are more earth friendly and environmentally conscious activities just around the corner. Watch for more information over the coming weeks about Earth Day – Wednesday, April 22, 2009. To increase participation and, therefore, awareness about Earth Day, activities in the City of Welland are being planned for the weekend before Earth Day on Saturday, April 18, 2009. Events this year in Welland are being sponsored by Welland Recreational Canal Corporation.

*About **Earth Hour**: **Earth Hour** started in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 when 2.2 million homes and business switched off their lights for one hour. In just one year that number rose to 50 million worldwide, with the hope that this year’s event would see 1 billion people turn off their lights from 8:30 to 9:30 pm on Saturday, March 28, 2009.*

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