

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CITY EXPLORES RENEWABLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVE FOR HEATING, COOLING BUILDINGS

Medicine Hat – Test drilling will start Monday, Aug. 15, 2005 to determine the feasibility of using aquifer thermal energy storage (ATES) as a renewable energy alternative for heating and cooling buildings in Medicine Hat.

The City of Medicine Hat will potentially be evaluating two ATES sites, one in Ranchlands and one in Southlands. If a suitable location is found, further testing will take place this winter with preliminary designs for a multi-family residential pilot project being completed by March 2006.

“The aquifer thermal energy storage pilot project has the theoretical potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (non-renewable energy consumption) by over 50 per cent when compared to conventional heating and cooling,” says Mayor Garth Vallely. “One of this Council’s main priorities is environmental stewardship and this project addresses one of our key objectives to explore alternative energy opportunities.”

Here’s how ATES works. During the summer, cool water from an aquifer (cold well) beneath the surface is pumped from the well to a building ventilation system for direct cooling. In the process of putting water through the ventilation system to cool down the air, the water picks up thermal energy. This warm water is then returned to a different location in the aquifer (hot well).

In the winter, the flow is reversed. Warm water is pumped from the hot well and sent through the building’s heating system to pre-heat intake air. (In some cases, a heat pump may be added to provide more thermal energy to the air.) In transferring thermal energy to the air, the warm water cools. This cool water is returned to the cold well and the cycle repeats itself next year.

“The idea behind ATES is to store energy when it is available and retrieve it when it’s needed to heat or cool buildings rather than relying solely on a traditional source of energy,” says Russ Smith, Manager, Environmental Management for the City.

The ATES project is jointly funded by the City of Medicine Hat and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Enabling Fund.

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