

APRIL 2010

ecoENERGY Retrofit for Homes Bookings Closed

On March 31, the federal government abruptly suspended the ecoENERGY Retrofit for Homes program.

Homeowners who have already booked a home energy audit can continue with the program. The deadline for having the renovations and the post-evaluation completed is still March 31, 2011 and REAL encourages its clients to do their work and the post-evaluation as soon as possible to ensure they have access to funds.

However, no new bookings for pre-retrofit audits are being accepted.

The popular program made it possible for homeowners to receive up to \$10,000 in federal and provincial rebates to make energy efficient upgrades to their homes. The retrofit program put money into the local economy, stimulated green jobs, and created energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions. Locally, REAL's ecoENERGY audits have stimulated more than \$800,000 in economic activity for local contractors and building supply stores and provided an average grant of just under \$3,000 per homeowner.

We still await word about whether the Ontario government, which has been matching the federal grants, will continue with the program. Natural Resources Canada has said it would continue to process applications for the provincial partners.

If you wish to confirm that you have had an audit booked through REAL please leave a message at (613) 283-9500. If you wish to follow this issue, you can go to savehomeenergy.ca and/or join the Keep the ecoENERGY Retrofit - Homes program alive on Facebook.

A Whole Lot of People Get "FIT"

We had a terrific response to the "Get "Fit", Go Green and Make Money" sessions in March. The presentations attracted 70 people the first night and 90 people the second, from all across the region. All were anxious to learn about the opportunity for small producers - homeowners, farms, small businesses and community groups - to enter the renewable energy market. Though the FIT (> 10 kWh) and microFIT (<10 kWh) programs apply to all renewable energy

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technologies, it is the rooftop or groundmount solar photovoltaic (PV) systems which will be the most popular microFIT project.

REAL arranged for SWITCH, a non profit sustainable energy association serving southeastern Ontario, to present on the FIT and

microFIT programs on March 10. ecoPerth provided more details on how to determine if microFIT is right for you on March 23. Both presentations were held at the Rideau Canal Museum. Some local suppliers of solar PV products were present both evenings to answer questions before and after the main presentations.

From the participant evaluations, it appears there is a lot of demand for impartial information on these renewable energy technologies out there. REAL is considering how we could help. In addition, the workshop drew some attention to REAL and to the museum. Quite a few people had never heard of REAL before, and many had never been to the museum.

Thanks to the presenters, to the Valley Heartland Community Development Foundation for their financial support of the EMC advertising and refreshments, and to Lisa Bell, the Rideau Canal Manager, for volunteering her time to make the auditorium available to us.

Awesome Awning

Have you seen our awesome awning? If you are travelling south on William Street from Hwy 43 you can't miss it! The bright yellow awning over the customer entrance was just one of the building improvements made with the Trillium capital grant awarded REAL last June. Thanks to Heather McLenaghan for modifying the REAL Deal logo for this usage, and Alan Gilhooly of Healey's Glass for his patience while we hemmed and hawed over what would work best. Next up is new windows in the office area, and improved upstairs flooring. All the work must be completed for June.

Pitch In Smiths Falls April 17 - May 2, 2010

**Kickoff Day
Saturday, April 17
9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**



**Meet at Fergusson
and Ferrara
We'll bring the
bags. Please wear gloves and sturdy
footwear.**

**Can't come then?
Register to do another site
within the two week period
residents - groups - businesses**

It's Up to You!

**Call (613)283-9819 or
email cnddavidson@cogeco.ca**



REAL Deal Spring Happenings

Spring is sprung (or could it be summer?) Come to the REAL Deal for gardening supplies, furniture, rain barrels, sports racquets, a good selection of beds and couches, and renovation supplies such as complete vanities, interior and exterior doors, and sinks.

In March the store featured golf supplies, roller blades, wedding accessories and, of course, Easter decorations.

We are anxious to clear some of the good used items out of our upstairs storage area so that a new floor can be laid down. The nicer weather will make it possible to display a few things outside some days. The current floor is very rough, uneven, and unsafe. We are considering removing and selling the decorative tin panels and reinsulating the back wall. Also on order are new triple pane windows for the office area.

March's "Disaster of the Month" was a break in one Friday night. The customer doors and a locked interior door were damaged and our petty cash and donation box (with contents) were stolen. The total comes in under our insurance deductible, so we are in the hole at least \$600 as a result. The thieves have not been apprehended.

But on the positive side, our search for a Store Manager has ended with the hiring of Ian McLeish (see separate story). We had many excellent candidates this time round, and thank everyone who applied, and especially Susan Brandum for looking after the store since mid-November. We are pleased, too, that Don Harvey, who began with us as a volunteer, has now been hired on three days a week (see profile next page.)

But we still couldn't do it without our faithful store volunteers, who in the past two months have included: Harley Bell, Rick Brunetto, Karen Durocher, Stephanie Durocher, Dave Fergus, Dan Hawkins, Barb Hicks, Debbie Howse, Brenda King, John Lockett, Bonita

Lucas, Una Pugh, Spencer Skalko, Debra Thompson, and Devin Van Slooten. Many volunteers have other commitments over the summer, so if you have some free hours, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Lynn Preston at (613) 283-9500.

Sorry, the REAL Deal Does Not Accept...

- **Clothing of any Kind.** Many other non-profit stores would welcome your donations of clothing.
- **Draperies and Bedding.** Try your local Salvation Army Thrift Store.
- **Encyclopedias and Hard Cover Text Books.** We just can't sell them. As a last resort you can remove the hard covers and put the pages in with your paper recycling.
- **Most Electronics.** If it isn't working, take it to one of the OES depots (see electronics story).
- **Large Appliances, Working or Not.** We do not have the capacity for "white goods" such as washing machines and stoves. Try used appliance stores or sell for scrap metal.

Bringing us these items costs REAL time and money. Donations are appreciated during store hours ONLY. We are open Thurs.-Sat. 10 - 4. Please note the above and spread the word!

Ask for a flier at the store, see the website www.REALaction.ca/REALDeal, or call the store to be sure: (613) 283-7999.

Rideau.Reuses.com
free online waste exchange

- ★ **post items you want**
- ★ **post items to give away**
- ★ **charge up to \$99 if you wish**

New Store Manager Hired

REAL is pleased to welcome our new REAL Deal Store Manager, Ian McLeish, who joined us March 19.

Ian has 30 years of retail and management experience with The News Group, IKEA, Home Depot, Sam the Record Man and an independent music store, all in Ottawa. His passion is music: he is a musician, collector, archivist, composer and producer. He is also passionate about protecting the environment and is excited about joining us. "I have been an ardent recycler for the last decade and strongly believe that we need to reduce the waste that is running rampant in our society". He is looking forward to increasing awareness, giving back and generally making a difference.

Ian, his wife and four cats moved to Smiths Falls in 2007, and live a short bicycle ride down the road from the store. Come on in and say hello and talk reusing (or cats, or music or anything else!)

Don Harvey Promoted

What happens when a super volunteer gets promoted? He gets hired!

Don Harvey began volunteering three days a week through Ontario Works at the REAL Deal Store in November and loved the place so much he started coming in when the store wasn't open. Don works in receiving, moving and pricing large items, testing appliances, keeping tabs on our selection of renovation materials, and helping customers find what they need, amongst other things. But then we realized we didn't want to lose him, so he was hired in early March.

Don began his career as a supply technician with the Canadian Armed Forces, and then worked in manufacturing. Raised in Carleton Place, he now calls Smiths Falls home. When not at the REAL Deal he enjoys gaming and movies. He



Don Harvey and Ian McLeish

particularly enjoys working with the other staff and volunteers at the store, and appreciates the opportunity to interact with the public.

Volunteer Profile - Debra Thompson *by Lynn Preston*

Why volunteer? "It's the people." So says Debra Thompson, volunteer at the REAL Deal Store. "I've met some wonderful people working here", says Debra. "It's just a wonderful environment to work in".

Debra Thompson has been volunteering her time at the REAL Deal since November 2009. She wanted to work in a store environment but without the high paced pressure of the usual retail outlets. "I wanted to learn how to use a cash register and other skills. Working at the REAL DEAL has taught me that and more".

Debra, born in Westport and a resident of Smiths Falls for the last nine years, enjoys watching the local wildlife and relaxing at home with her two daughters. Debra brings her sunny disposition and her love for the environment to the REAL Deal store three days a week.

If you would like to volunteer your time at the REAL Deal or for any other REAL projects, contact Lynn Preston, Volunteer Co-ordinator at (613) 283-9500 or lynn@realdealstore.ca.

Lurking in a Marsh near You

by Simon Lunn

Can you name the smallest North American heron found right here in the Smiths Falls Swale? Hint 1: It is half the size and even more secretive than its cousin, the American Bittern. Hint 2: while it occurs widely in the eastern US, Central and South America, it is a **threatened species in Canada**, where it summers in southern Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec and New Brunswick. Hint 3: It is rarely seen, but can be considered an indicator (species) of large healthy wetlands like many of those along the Rideau Waterway.

And the winner is... the very small but quite colourful **Least Bittern**. Weighing in at barely three oz. (50-100 g.), it is a rather stout but short (one foot or 30 cm) tall wading marsh bird. It has long yellow legs and bill, light brown and white stripes on its throat and chest, warm orange-brown along the sides of its body, neck and face, and the male has a black back and head cap.

Least Bitterns live in wetlands - the bigger and quieter the better. In particular, they love cattail marshes with standing water. When hungry, Least Bitterns eat small fish and insects. By straddling reeds, they can feed in deeper water than other herons who usually wade through the water. When alarmed, a Least Bittern freezes in place with bill pointed up and eyes turned forward toward the threat. What's more, they are known to sway their body to match the movement of wind-blown cattails. When nesting, this bittern builds a small platform of vegetation (with a canopy) on the ground or a floating island, lays two to seven pale blue-green eggs, and then relies on the water level not going up too much before the young leave the nest!

So you might ask why we are talking about this little fellow right now. The reasons are straightforward. We know from recent reports that Least Bitterns occur and nest in the Swale. We understand that their populations in North America are declining, and that they have been

declared a Species-at-Risk largely because of habitat loss caused by the alteration or draining of wetlands for development and other purposes. So before REAL picks the exact route of a trail or other Environment Centre features behind the REAL Deal Store, it is important to find out if (and how) the Least Bittern is using habitat in the area. If it is, we will adjust our plans to avoid any harmful impact, and then proceed with requesting Parks Canada's approval to continue this next phase of our plans for the property.

Simon Lunn (REAL member and volunteer biologist) will be making some observations, and inventory work will be undertaken by Parks Canada during the upcoming spring and summer breeding season. Information on other fauna and flora will be recorded at the same time.



We look forward to learning more about how we can protect the Least Bittern and its fellow inhabitants that live in and around the Swale. Maybe we will have a new story to tell on the next Voyageur Canoe trip through the area!

*REAL's Annual General Meeting
evening of Wednesday, June 16*

*Members are entitled to vote.
Watch for an e-mail or print notice in
late May.
Treats and social time will be on the
agenda!*

Options for Electronics Recycling Improving

Local options for electronics recycling just got better! As of April 1, depots registered with the Ontario Stewardship Program are now accepting Phase 2

products free of charge.

The list is very extensive - you'll be hard pressed to think of something electronic that can't be

returned. So let the spring cleaning begin!



Items accepted are:

- Computer Stuff: desktop, handheld and portable computers; computer peripherals such as monitors, modems, scanners, printers, keyboards, mice, drives etc.
- Music Stuff: amplifiers, equalizers, radios, receivers, speakers, tape player and recorders, tuners, turntables.
- Phone Stuff: telephones (physical and accessories), cell phones, PDAs and pagers
- Viewing Stuff: cameras, digital photo frames, televisions, video players, video projectors, video recorders and cameras
- Copiers

The goal of the OES program is to keep more of these electronics from ending up in landfills and to encourage more reuse and recycling opportunities. The steel, glass, copper, aluminum, plastics and precious metals that make up these devices can be recovered and reused to make new products.

Find the depot closest to you by going to dowhatyoucan.ca, choosing electronics, and searching by community or postal code. There

are established depots in Carleton Place, Brockville, and Smiths Falls. In Kemptville they are scheduled dates at RD Long Computers. For our readers without internet access, the Smiths Falls depots are:

Twenty Twelve Electronics Recycling

42 James St. (right hand end), (613) 284-2424
Weekdays 9 - 6, Saturdays 9 - 4

Web: www.tter.ca

They will also take microwave ovens for \$10, and other electronic or electric items not listed above for \$1.10 per kg.

Staples

275 Brockville St. (County Fair Mall).

Mon - Wed 9 - 7, Thurs - Friday 9 - 9, Sat 9 - 6, Sun 12 - 5

Web: www.Staples.ca

Some restrictions apply.

Painted Panel Project

The **painting panel project** is moving along nicely. Pam Craig, an art and geography teacher at SFDCI, has some students eager to come up with a concept for panels to adorn the long outside wall of the REAL Deal Store and Environment Centre. It was determined that a full fledged mural would be too expensive and difficult to do, and a challenge to maintain.

Once the design is approved by the Town and REAL, it will be painted on plywood panels which will be installed on the concrete wall. Students will do the painting after school hours to earn community service hours.

Thanks to Rideau Home Hardware for their contribution of the panels and additional hardware, Tom and Pat Foulkes for covering the paint costs, Peter Au for getting the ball rolling, and Ron Stewart for carrying on while Peter is out of the country. And most importantly, thank you to the SFDCI staff and students for taking this on - we look forward to seeing what they come up with.



Our
Corporate Members

Andress Independent Grocer
Canadian Tire, Smiths Falls
Civitan Club
Cogeco Cable Inc.
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
The Garden Market
Healey Transportation Ltd.
Dr. David Hicks
Kinsmen Club
Man Ling Restaurant
The Performance Group of Companies
RANA International
Renewable Energy of Plum Hollow
Rideau Home Hardware Building
Centre
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Rotary Club of Smiths Falls
Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 95
Royal LePage Pauline Aunger Real
Estate
Scotiabank
Silver Fern Contracting
Smiths Falls Lions Club
Sun Life Insurance
Tim Hortons of Smiths Falls
Top Drawer & Denny K's Car Care
Town of Smiths Falls

In REAL Life

REAL welcomes Spencer Skalko, the latest Katimavik youth to do a work placement with us. Spencer, who comes from Stoney Creek, will be busy at the Club for Youth on Monday through Wednesday, and at the REAL Deal Thursdays and Fridays. Spencer is looking forward to making a difference in the community, particularly with youth. The latest group of **Katimavik participants arrived in Smiths Falls March 3**, and will be heading off to farm billets in mid-May for two weeks before making their way to Burnaby, BC .

Our first ever **Green Liquid Refreshments** evening at Coffee Culture on Mon. Mar. 29 was a success. Eight people came out to the coffee shop on Russell Street to have some free flowing environmental discussion. So we're going to give it another whirl the third Monday of the month, which will be **Mon. April 19**. An e-mail reminder will go out closer to the time. All welcome- this isn't just for REAL people!

Don't forget to **set aside some beer and liquor bottles and cans for REAL's bottle drive**. Volunteers will be collecting them outside of the Beer Store **Friday July 23 and Saturday July 24**. If you have lots and would prefer not to make the trip, call 283-9819 and we'll see if we can arrange pickup for you.

Our map of **easy bike routes through the countryside surrounding Smiths Falls** is almost ready. Thanks to everyone who assisted, especially Heather McLenaghan, the designer, and Judy Snider, who biked the routes. We will be posting it on our website, and hope to get it on the Smiths Falls Town and Chamber websites as well.

A handful of people have expressed interest in a **community garden**, but we need more solid interest and someone who can champion the project in order to proceed. A meeting of interested parties is tentatively planned for 1:30

on Thurs. Apr. 22. If you would like to have a garden plot, or have some gardening or organizing experience to contribute, please call Sue at (613) 267-2257.

Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between growers and eaters. At the beginning of the growing season, CSA “members” enter an agreement with the farmer to supply a share of a season's worth of vegetables. **Lanark CSA members are accepting subscriptions now.** See the Lanark Local Flavours website under "who's growing" <http://www.lanarklocalflavour.ca/?q=community-shared-agriculture>.

Third annual Earth Day Environmental Fair in North Grenville, Sun. Apr. 18 11 - 3 p.m. in the W.B. George Centre, Kemptville Campus of U. of Guelph. A day out for the family and a chance to learn about positive actions in the community. Contact Clare, c2nlt2@sympatico.ca.

Do you regularly pass through any of the **smaller communities in the area**? We would like to be able to distribute printed newsletters in locations beyond Smiths Falls and Perth. If you would be able to deposit some of the Update in a public location (e.g. a library, municipal office) five times year, please get in touch.

Helpful Websites

- See a little instructional video on Ottawa's Green Bin program. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwCCf4E8nqU>. It makes a good case for composting even if you're going the backyard route, and is a neat concept - encouraging other residents to spread the message.
- If you're heating with wood, make sure you're doing it properly. See the CMHC website under Home and Property Maintenance to download the PDF of item 66067, "A Guide to Residential Wood Heating".
- A creative and humorous explanation of some

of the more prevalent toxic chemicals in use today. See the "Bad Actor Headshots" in the PDF:

http://www.greenbiz.com/sites/default/files/Bad_Actor_Report_Part_1.PDF

Next Issue

Submissions for the next issue can be sent to dhicks11@cogeco.ca by June 15, 2010 or call Barb at (613) 283-9966.

Contact Us

REAL

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Web: www.REALaction.ca

Environmental Projects Manager

Phone: (613) 267-2257

E-mail: sbrandum@cogeco.ca

REAL Deal Store & Environment Centre

85 William St. W., Smiths Falls
(across from Railway Museum)

Store open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Phone: (613) 283-7999

For Well Aware, ecoENERGY, or other programs,

Phone: (613) 283-9500

