

City energy exchange more than just hot air

Open house on Tuesday to discuss renewable sources

By Daily Courier Staff

The City of Kelowna is exploring the opportunity to use renewable energy sources in partnership with Community Energy Association.

"District energy can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring businesses and residences have a secure source of energy," community energy planner Peter Robinson said. "By using renewable sources and sharing energy, both economic and environmental savings can be found."

The public can find out more about district energy and provide comment at an open house at the waste water treatment plant at 951 Raymer Ave. from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

During initial consultations with technical experts and local stakeholders in October, the group saw opportunities for district energy systems in four key areas: the city centre, Orchard Park/Highway 97, South Pandosy and Rutland.

At this stage, the opportunities primarily involve recovering wasted heat and using that heat in new, and in some cases, existing buildings, said Robinson.

"District energy systems provide heat, and sometimes cooling, to more than one building, where sources of excess heat are matched with those that require it," he said. "(There are) 5,000 systems in operation in the U.S. and about 150 of varying sizes throughout Canada."

There are two district energy systems in Kelowna. Waste heat from the city's wastewater plant is used to heat part of Okanagan College. At UBC Okanagan, heat from the aquifer or underground water is captured by the campus. The systems are owned by the institutions.

The open house is a step toward a district energy implementation plan for the city. For more information, visit Kelowna.ca/cityprojects.