

Attention News Editors:

City of Toronto splashes into solar at Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre

TORONTO, Sept. 20 /CNW/ - Today, community members joined Councillor Paula Fletcher (Ward 30 Toronto - Danforth) and City of Toronto representatives at a showcase of the solar hot water system that heats the indoor swimming pools at Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre. The centre, operated by Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation, has two indoor pools with an area of 360 sq. m and 70 sq. m, respectively. Under the umbrella of Toronto's Energy Retrofit Program

(www.toronto.ca/environment/initiatives/energy_retrofits.htm), the Jimmie Simpson pool conversion to solar heating began in October 2006 and has an estimated cost savings of \$12,095 annually thanks to reduced energy bills.

"The City of Toronto has earned acclaim as a world leader on the environment," said Councillor Paula Fletcher. "The Solar Pool Party is a great way to invite the community to see how the City is taking great steps towards energy conservation, learn about renewable energy alternatives and how to save money on their own energy bills."

As the home of Canada's largest solar-heated pool, Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre uses two solar systems, consisting of 91 unglazed solar collector panels covering 400 sq. m of the flat roof of the swimming pool area. The piping system has a dedicated pump and is piped as a secondary water system to the swimming pool water circulation system. The system is controlled by the building's computerized control system. A temperature sensor mounted adjacent to the solar panels measures ambient conditions (solar and wind temperature) and determines whether solar heating is available. The controls also prevent losses when heat is not available.

"Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation is proud to support the energy retrofits at Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre because it is not only a great gathering place for the community and a great place for exercise, but the solar heating system uses renewable energy, saves money and protects the environment," said Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

The Solar Pool Party at Jimmie Simpson Recreation Centre included workshops on renewable energy and energy efficiency, solar neighbourhood tours of the Riverdale neighbourhood, children's activities, pool games and exhibits from solar companies and community groups.

"The Riverdale neighbourhood has done a great job of bringing neighbours together to purchase solar energy equipment for their homes," said Mary Pickering, Associate Director, Toronto Atmospheric Fund. "We hope to use the lessons learned from this local experience to accelerate renewable energy across the whole city, both on homes and on city facilities."

In June, 2008 the City of Toronto and Toronto Atmospheric Fund launched Solar Neighbourhoods, a pilot program to help homeowners in Ward 30 conserve water and energy, providing financial incentives to purchase a solar water heater. Solar Neighbourhoods will help homeowners assess their home's suitability for solar panels, assist with finding a contractor, monitor the system, and provide financing options and cash rebates of up to \$1,000. These rebates are in addition to an existing \$1,000 now available from provincial and federal governments.

The City of Toronto will also be accelerating solar installations on its own facilities, using a unique "solar utility" model to expand solar heating to many more of the City's pools - a step that supports actions outlined in the City of Toronto's Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan. Learn more about Solar Neighbourhoods by visiting

www.solarneighbourhoods.ca.

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to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. In the past three years, Toronto has won numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.

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