



Print

February 8, 2008

Sun Farmers of Canada

by [Randyn Seibold](#)

Utility-scale photovoltaic (PV) power is breaking ground on Canadian soil and dispelling myths about the viability of this energy resource in "the North." From the electricity market, to manufacturing and education, the PV industry is becoming an increasingly safe bet in Canada. The focal point of this action is Ontario, where the provincial government's Standard Offer Program has spurred courageous investors forward in the brand new niche of solar farming.

The largest single solar farm project in the world was announced in California last April, the 80-megawatt (MW), 640-acre Community Choice project, which dwarfs even Germany's current PV plants. Two of Ontario's announced contracts are nearly as big, coming in between 60 and 70 MW, while a third developer wants to build 150 MW of solar farms in different locations. However, under the Standard Offer Program projects need to be ten megawatts or less, so the physical footprint of these developments will remain comparatively small. [OptiSolar Farms Canada](#), [Skypower Corp](#), and [Pod Generating Group](#) are three players to watch in what is becoming a veritable Canadian Solar Olympics.

The most northern location is in the city of Sault St Marie, where Pod is bringing the power of the sun to this hard industry town. The Canadian-owned company is headquartered in the Sault and plans to create 10 and 20 MW clusters in different quadrants of the city. President and Sault-native Glen Martin is a former aerospace engineer, and worked on space-based generation systems, bringing a 'super-trades' background to his new role as Canadian Solar Farmer. The electricity from the arrays will feed directly into the municipal grid, bringing a degree of clean power self-reliance to the community.

"We are pleased with the leadership demonstrated by the Ontario Power Authority in bringing the Standard Offer Program into effect," said Martin. "The Sault St Marie projects will require about 45 qualified people, and these positions are generally in four categories: real estate, financing, electrical engineering and project management." Pod Generating Group is working closely on project development with [Emcore Corp](#), a company with strong experience in space-based photovoltaics. Emcore is engaged in developing Concentrating Solar Power technology at its New Mexico facilities, and intends to have prototypes in operation at the Sault St Marie projects. The majority of capacity will be newer generation 'flat-plate' modules of an undisclosed brand.

On the West Coast, in Burnaby BC, another Canadian company is making strides in the solar farming sector with installations across the Atlantic. [Day4 Energy](#), a manufacturer of an innovative, high-efficiency solar module, recently announced that its first PV plant, a 1-MW project near Riggensbach Germany, built for EnBW, is performing well. More than 6,000 panels were used in the project, supplied by Day4 Systems, the company's German project management subsidiary. This is a major milestone for Day4, which was officially incorporated in 2001. It has recently gone public, and is now expanding its manufacturing facilities.

Favorable initial performance and on-schedule construction has helped Day4 secure more work with EnBW for two additional projects, to be built over the next 3 years.

The current pace of activity in Canadian PV power, exemplified by Pod Generating Group, Day4 and others, leaves no doubt that there is a future for this industry North of the 49th parallel.

For Further Information

- <http://www.cansia.ca/>
- <http://www.powerauthority.on.ca/SOP/>

Please Note: RenewableEnergyAccess.com does not endorse the sites behind these links. We offer them for your additional research. Following these links will open a new browser window.

<http://www.renewableenergyaccess.com/rea/news/story?id=51393>

Copyright © 1999-2008 RenewableEnergyAccess.com
All rights reserved.

