



VUNTUT GWITCHIN GOVERNMENT

Government of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

P.O. Box 94,
Old Crow, Yukon
Y0B 1N0

Phone: (867)966-3261
Fax: (867)966-3800
Web: www.vgfn.ca

Old Crow Running on Solar Power



The Old Crow Solar Project, pictured above, is generating power for more than 14 hours every day. (Photo: Paul Josie/Josie's Old Crow Adventures)

(Old Crow, Yukon, Canada – May 3, 2021)

The Old Crow Solar Project has achieved stage one commissioning and is now generating power for the community. On sunny and cloudy days, energy is being produced for more than 14 hours a day and energy production is trending upwards as the days grow longer. This important milestone brings the Old Crow Solar Project closer to completion.

Once fully operational, the Old Crow Solar Project will reduce the amount of diesel fuel used for power generation by 190,000 liters each year, cutting annual carbon dioxide emissions by 750 tonnes – the equivalent of taking 160 cars off the road. In this first stage of commissioning, the PV solar array will operate at approximately 12 per cent capacity, to avoid disruptions to the stability of the Old Crow electrical grid. Power output will increase once a battery energy storage system and microgrid controller are installed. This second phase of commissioning is now underway and puts the project on track to be fully commissioned by July 2021. Once fully operational, the solar facility will produce enough electricity to meet the full load of the community and the diesel facility will turn off completely on sunny summer days, decreasing the operation of the diesel generation facility by 2,000 engine hours per year.

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Reducing the community's reliance on diesel is in keeping with the 2019 *Yeendoo Diinehdoo Ji'heezrit Nits'oo Ts'o'Nan He'aa Declaration*. As an Independent Power Producer, the Old Crow Solar Project will also become an important revenue source for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. A first-of-its kind Electricity Purchase Agreement (EPA) between the First Nation and ATCO Electric Yukon establishes that ATCO will purchase the electricity generated at the solar PV facility. This EPA reflects ATCO's collaborative approach to working alongside First Nations in the North to enable the development of new and innovative renewable energy infrastructure, assisting Indigenous communities achieve greater energy autonomy and lowering environmental impacts on the land.

The Old Crow Solar Project was expected to be completed last summer. Setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the project's completion by a year. The Vuntut Gwitchin Government is grateful for the partnerships and support from ATCO Electric Yukon, the Canadian Northern Economic Agency, Natural Resources Canada and the Yukon Development Corporation, and project contractors that are helping to realize a clean energy future.

Quotes:

"As a government, our sovereignty comes from the land and the land is a conduit that projects our relations. This project allows us to pay respect to the land and our traditions while creating opportunity for future generations. The Old Crow Solar Project presents an opportunity for our First Nation to take advantage of these technologies that embody our Gwich'in values of living in balance with our land in perpetuity."

Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm, Vuntut Gwitchin Government

"Helping customers in remote communities develop sustainable and renewable energy solutions is incredibly important to us at ATCO. We're proud of our steadfast and long-running partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and we're excited to enter the next phase of their solar project in Old Crow."

Jay Massie, Vice President, Northern Development & Indigenous Relations, ATCO

For Media Inquiries Please Contact:

Rebecca Shrubbs

Associate Director, Intergovernmental Relations & Governance
Vuntut Gwitchin Government
rshrubbs@vgfn.net