



Alberta's green energy market is growing by only 10 per cent compared to 20 per cent in other provinces such as Ontario and B.C., says Richards, but he's hoping to change all that with One Source Energy Inc.

people may be slow to change. When he researched different companies for green energy systems he found the information was confusing.

"Not all companies offered a full package for specific green energies," says Sopher. "Prices varied a lot and as I asked more questions I found some didn't include certain parts of the installation. In one case I was quoted a great price for geothermal installation only to find out after a few more questions that I would have to find someone else to do the pipe fitting which wasn't included in the price."

Sopher believes these inconsistencies may be because we are on the edge of new technologies that are rapidly changing in order to become more efficient and

affordable and keeping up with research may be hard to do in an increasingly busy field. He suggests doing a lot of homework first and asking a lot of questions.

Sopher thinks that the upfront costs of these systems may also be a factor. His geothermal system cost \$10,000 more than the high-end high-efficiency furnace and air-conditioning system he had priced out for his new home. Not a significant amount, especially with a four- to five-year payback time on the geothermal system, but for some people this would be an amount better spent on higher end finishes in the house.

David Kelly of Sedmek Inc., a company that specializes in solar energy, agrees. People are more likely to spend the money on granite countertops than



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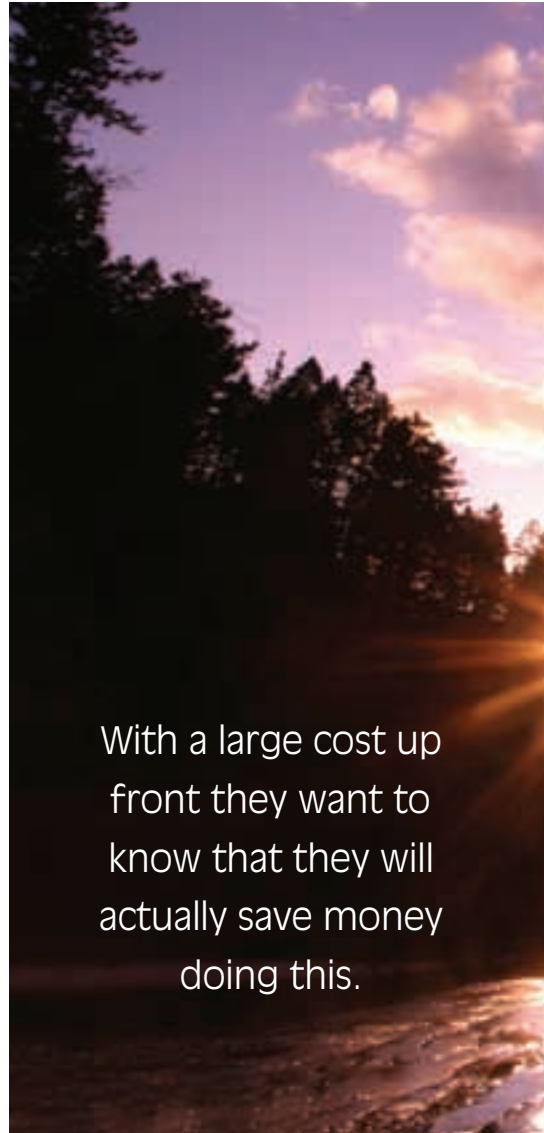
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actually save money
doing this.

on the environment, he says. But he feels these attitudes will soon change as the environment becomes more of a priority and the urgency to cut down on emissions increases.

Sedmek Inc. is best known for its large-scale projects such as the Child Development Centre (CDC), beside the Alberta Children's Hospital, that won the 2007 Canadian Solar Industries Association (CanSIA) Solar PV Project of the Year and the Drake Landing Solar Community in Okotoks that won the 2006 CanSIA Solar Thermal Project of the Year.

Kelly, like Richards, feels the government isn't doing enough to encourage people to switch to greener alternatives. Although his business has been doubling every year for the past four years, this year the government made it a lot harder



to switch by introducing a whole new set of permits required in order to set up solar panels. Kelly worries what the repercussions will be.

"There's a longer list of paperwork to do for installations now," says Kelly. "You have to pay \$2,200 in permit fees before you can even start installing a PV system. These permits increase costs to the installations and it now takes longer to do the paperwork than to do the installation!"

Jack Pyc, a client of Sedmek Inc, had his solar PV panels installed six months ago and he's glad he did it then. His project was completed just before the new regulations. He agrees the government needs to make the process more streamlined, not more complicated.

"The city doesn't make it any easier," he

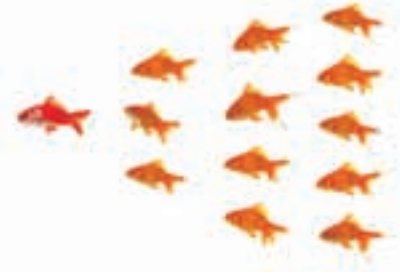
says. "It takes longer now and you need engineers drawings for the installation and there's more research involved."

Dale Bateman of Ener-West Geo-Energy Services, a company that specializes in geothermal systems, couldn't agree more.

"There's a real lack of government interception," he says. "There's a lot of discussion but not a lot of real assistance. Financial aid is not going to the customers nor are we seeing a lot of real money going into these types of projects."

Ener-West Geo-Energy Services does the bulk of its installations on residential units and is now trying to direct their business towards subdivisions where all the residences in a new community would be sold with geothermal heating. The company's recent partnership with ATCO Gas and Avalon Master Builder

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to build 40 homes in southeast Calgary goes a long way in getting more homes set up with geothermal systems.

People may be slow to adapt to new alternative energies for other reasons such as being unsure as to whether there are savings or not when they do switch. With a large cost up front they want to know that they will actually save money doing this. However, significant savings are quite standard post installation.

Six months after the installation of his 16 solar panels that provide 2.5 kW, Pyc is happy to report that his electric bill for his family is half of his parent's bill with a 10-15 year payback on the PV panels. Although he would like to get his bill down to zero, he points out that there's still a way to go before it becomes more affordable.

"It depends on how much money you want to spend but, right now, it's still not feasible to live off-grid," he says. "We did it to reduce our ecological footprint knowing we're doing something good for the environment and hope others will follow suit."

Kelly reports similar savings with his own 2 kW PV system that covers 50 per cent of his electrical needs. He also reports savings of \$200 per year on his solar hot water system. At the Drake Landing Solar Community there is a 60 per cent saving on hot water costs and an additional savings of 90 per cent on space heating. The PV panels on the CDC building, a commer-

Sopher, who hopes to have his house completed by next year, calculates that his savings will be \$2,000 or more per year with a four-year payback time for his system.

cial application, provides 20 per cent of the building's power.

Sopher, who hopes to have his house completed by next year, calculates that his savings will be \$2,000 or more per year with a four-year payback time for his system. However, he points out that the fans needed to push the air through the geothermal system may double his electrical bill. He is considering a vertical access wind turbine, a unique turbine that works in light winds coming from any direction, in order to offset his electrical cost.

As companies like Ener-West Geo-Energy Services and Sedmek Inc. do their part with more multi-installations in new subdivisions, prices may start to become more affordable. One Source Energy Inc. hopes to do their part by targeting the younger crowd using the Internet with its One Source One Voice campaign. Hopefully, the Alberta government will begin seeing the importance of helping owners convert existing homes to green energy and start providing financial incentives for them. **BIC**

