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Smart Green  
Communities

Communautés  
Éco-intelligentes

## **reThink Green Launches Energy Sustainability Program for Northern Municipalities**

The Smart Green Communities program has received \$96,000 in funding from the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) with the goal of supporting a coordinated approach to community energy planning across Manitoulin Island and surrounding region.

The Smart Green Communities program began in summer 2017 as part of reThink Green’s target-based sustainability program for businesses, Green Economy North. Members have access to free training events on climate change, and offers support on reporting energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and developing coordinated structures for energy planning. It has since helped regional municipalities identify money-saving projects to reduce their energy consumption at public facilities.

“We developed the Smart Green Communities program structure in response to the distinct needs of small and medium municipalities in the region,” said Raili Lakanen, Manager of the Smart Green Communities program. “Our office may be based in Sudbury, but we are focused on supporting the transition to a sustainable and resilient future across all of Northeastern Ontario.”

Today, the program is past pilot and is announcing that it will be extending the scope of its work on Manitoulin Island, made possible in part through the financial support of the IESO’s Education and Capacity Building (ECB) Program. The objective of the ECB program is to provide funding support for projects that provide education, build capacity and develop the skills of municipalities, First Nation and Métis Communities, and other public sector entities, and to enhance their knowledge, awareness and participation in energy projects.

With the ECB program funding, the Smart Green Communities program will now be able to have a part-time staff member dedicated to data collection and energy plan harmonization and coordination on Manitoulin Island.

Lakanen said the program will be reaching out to municipalities and First Nations communities on Manitoulin Island over the coming months to determine their interest in participating in the membership-based program.

“Interested staff and community officials are also very welcome to reach out to us and we’d be pleased to meet with them and answer their questions – particularly as newly-elected councils are formed after the municipal election” Lakanen said.

**Contact**

David St. Georges, Communications Director

reThink Green / Green Economy North

[David.stgeorges@reThinkGreen.ca](mailto:David.stgeorges@reThinkGreen.ca)

249-878-9114

Raili Lakanen, Program Manager

Smart Green Communities

[Raili.Lakanen@reThinkGreen.ca](mailto:Raili.Lakanen@reThinkGreen.ca)

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