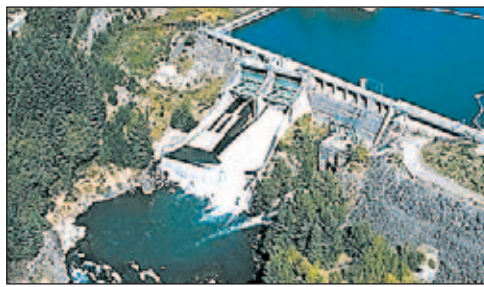


MONEY



Demand for power growing

Though B.C. Hydro didn't file a rate-increase application with its 2006 electricity plan, a request to the B.C. Utilities Commission suggests bigger bills are on the way

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MAKE • SAVE • SPEND

BRIAN LEWIS (EDITOR) • 604-605-2020 • blewis@png.canwest.com || THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006

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Yaletown firm likes increase in traffic



Greenwit Technologies' Steve Miloshev recommends saving on gas by riding the Motorino GTH, an electric motorcycle. JON MURRAY—THE PROVINCE

GREEN TECH: Selling mopeds 'in the hundreds'

JIM JAMIESON
BUSINESS REPORTER

Motorcycles have always been miserly on gasoline, but a Vancouver company showcased a model yesterday that uses none at all.

Yaletown-based Greenwit Technologies showed off its Motorino electric motorcycle, as one of dozens of companies exhibiting a wide range of environmentally friendly technologies and products at the Globe 2006 trade fair and conference kickoff yesterday.

However, don't expect to go very far, or very fast, but if you're looking for zero emissions at a cost of only pennies, then this may be your ride.

"With high fuel prices, people now are thinking about alternatives," said Greenwit spokesman

Phillipp Annen. "The technology has advanced to the point where this is workable now.

"In the past, the motors weren't strong enough and the batteries were too heavy."

Greenwit was introducing the scooters at Globe 2006, which build on the four-year-old company's line of electric mopeds.

Strictly a short-haul commuter vehicle, the Motorino is capable of a top speed of 70 km/h and has a range of 40 to 80 kilometres depending on usage. The battery takes about six hours to recharge at an estimated cost of 35 cents.

The electric motor can generate 2,000 watts, or 3.5 horsepower, but will be throttled back to 1,500 watts through the electronic controller to comply with B.C.'s limited-speed motorcycle guidelines.

That way, it can be operated by

someone with a regular driver's licence without motorcycle certification.

Annen said the company has been selling the mopeds "in the hundreds" and were hearing that customers wanted to go faster.

"We found people want to keep up with traffic," he said. "With this, you can go with the traffic flow."

Greenwit's scooter — which Annen said is virtually zero maintenance — sells for \$4,000. The batteries have an expected lifetime of 1,000 charges or three years and cost about \$400 to replace.

The components are manufactured in China and Taiwan and assembled here.

More than 2,000 participants from 75 countries are attending the environmental business gathering through tomorrow

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Work needed to keep expansion going

BANK REPORT: Alberta low tax rate threat to B.C.'s 'golden decade'

BY BRIAN LEWIS
BUSINESS EDITOR

B.C. is in the midst of a "golden decade" with its economy firing on all cylinders but British Columbians will have to "play hard and long" to keep the expansion going beyond the 2010 Olympics, a special report warned yesterday.

The 30-page TD Bank report — *B.C.'s Golden Decade: Can this Period of Celebration Take on a Longer Life?* — says that even though the province has shaken off the cobwebs of a long period of stagnation that began in 1981, it still hasn't fully recovered.

In 1981, the province enjoyed a 17-per-cent advantage over the rest of Canada in real output per

capita but by 2004, we'd slipped to a six-per-cent disadvantage.

Over the same period, real per capita after-tax income fell from 13 per cent over the national average to two per cent below that average.

"Even with strong growth over the remainder of this decade that gap will not close," the report warned. "B.C. desperately needs to force its golden decade into overtime but several new obstacles to growth are forming," added TD economist Derek Burleton.

These include an expectation that over the next few years the B.C. economy will likely operate well beyond its capacity limits.

This means cost pressures could escalate and that will slow the booming housing and construction sectors.

There's also a likelihood that the robust harvesting of pine beetle-infested timber in the province will slow after 2012, while already-

challenged labour force growth will ease further over the next few years as the first baby-boom wave begins to retire.

A further threat to B.C.'s growth is neighbouring Alberta, the report adds. While B.C. cannot hope to match Alberta's lower tax rates, it mustn't allow the gap between the two to widen, it warns.

While praising the B.C. government for balancing its budget, lowering taxes and cutting red tape, the report recommends that Victoria must continue lower taxes.

It also says the private sector must increase its investing in physical capital as well as in the provincial labour force, which it says is Canada's most highly educated workforce.

The report also suggests that while Alberta represents a competitive threat, it also can become a powerful partner in trade with Asia through B.C. gateway.

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