



Golden Museum and Archives

Where a Diverse History Meets a Diverse Future

For Immediate Release:

Energizing the Golden Museum and Archives: A Solar Project

January 31, 2025 - Golden, BC: The Golden Museum and Archives is excited to announce a major building upgrade coming in early 2025. This project focuses on the installation of a large solar array designed to bring the Golden Museum's power usage to net zero, meaning the building will generate as much power as it uses.

Throughout 2024, the Museum has been working with A Fit Right Efficient Energy Company Inc. and GreenLight Power to create a design that will reach the goal of being net-zero. This project, funded by Columbia Basin Trusts Non-profit Smart Grant, Destination BC's Tourism Climate Resiliency Initiative Grant, and BC Hydro's Solar Rebate Program, will create organizational and environmental sustainability.

"We are seeing more buildings and businesses take on solar projects," Brittany Newman, Executive Director of the Golden Museum says, "I think that climate change and the visible effects it is having globally have really impacted the way people think. Solar is a great way to cut down on gas emissions and create a more sustainable community. We've seen what extreme weather has been doing, especially locally, so people are taking whatever steps they can to lessen their environmental impact. There is currently a lot of public and financial support out there for environmental sustainability projects, right now. I encourage people to do some research and look into it. Also, propane, gas, and electricity are not getting any cheaper, so installing a system that makes a building self-sufficient has a definite appeal."

The Museum was built from a kit in 1970 by community volunteers. The 3300 sq. ft. building relies on electricity for heat, and costs between \$6,000 - \$7,000 a year to power. The Solar Array being installed on the museum will greatly reduce this cost and we estimate that the system will pay for itself within 12 years. Additionally, with the effects of climate change, including the on-going droughts, a self-generating system means that the museum is no longer reliant on hydroelectric generated power.

The unique shape of the building and its age have provided some challenges. Engineering inspections of the roof and upgrades to the building's electrical service were required before the project could even begin. It took many months of planning and designing to ensure the optimal output of energy from the placement of panels. The building's rounded roof ensured that a simple system wouldn't work.

"The Museum has been a fun system to design, as [the panels] are being place on the side of a Quonset which has added a level of difficulty, but these are the types of challenges I enjoy most," Thad Mertick, owner of A Fit Right Efficient Energy Company says. "Especially when we are able to find such a great answer, which has turned into a very efficient, clean, and advanced system."

While the main focus of this project is to become sustainable, the museum is also a place of learning. Because of this, part of the project includes a display that will be installed in the museum gallery so that

visitors can understand how the system works and monitor the energy production. This display is the first part of a future exhibit exploring power generation in Golden and Columbia Valley. The team is excited about the learning components this project offers, with Thad stating, "I love the thought of the museum and the mixture of old with the new technology. It's really exciting."

The 39.4KW system, worth approximately \$100,000, is expected to be installed on the Museum this spring.