

Giant solar park 'could power North American homes forever', says Solarform boss Melnik

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"Some people, when they hit their midlife crisis, buy Harley-Davidsons, sports cars or fast boats. Me, I built a solar system," joked Melnik, who is also president of Solarform Canada, at a rooftop reception at BRC recently.

"If we could build a giant solar park from here to Ottawa 20 miles wide, that's all it would take to power every single home in North America forever. That's it. Then you think about the pipeline they're going to build from (Alberta) to Texas, and we're going to do that for just 20 years of oil supply?"

The elevated solar panels allow air to flow underneath them, increasing efficiency while reducing operating

temperatures, a design among the first of its kind in North America. Another manufacturing firm next door to BRC has signed on to use its rooftop as a source of renewable energy and Melnik said the industry's potential is "limitless."

Governments around the world implementing Feed-In-Tariff Policies and Ontario's FIT Program is among the lead innovators in the encouragement of the development of renewable energy.

Melnik noted that in just a few months time, the efficiency of the solar panels has increased by 20 per cent, while production costs have dropped by 40 per cent as more efficient methods are discovered.

Follow these tips to keep winter energy bills

Spending more time inside during the winter is a reality, but it comes at a cost. Keep your energy bills low this season by following these four tips:

- Invest in energy efficient appliances.
- Install spray foam insulation.
- Wrap an insulating blanket around

your water heater.

- Install a programmable thermostat that turns down the heat at night while you sleep and during the day if no one is home.

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