

# Six Nations and Brant County launch OBP rooftop solar project

By Donna Duric  
Writer

The newly-formed Six Nations Economic Development Corporation celebrated the first-ever solar energy project on the reserve with a grand opening ceremony last Friday at Oneida Business Park and a rooftop tour of the historic solar project.

The historic project will bring \$2.5 million to the corporation's coffers over the next 20 years as part of the province's Feed in Tariff (FIT) program that provides provincial dollars to green energy projects in Ontario. The project is a partnership with Brant County municipal council.

The county will profit off the project with a 10 per cent ownership stake in the rooftop solar installation. Over 2,000 solar panels now cover the roof of the massive OBP industrial park building on Fourth Line Road near Hwy. 6.

Six Nations Elected Chief Ava Hill lauded the community as a leader in green energy projects.

"Six Nations is certainly



**Six Nations Economic Development Corporation president Matt Jamieson and Six Nations partners stand atop the Oneida Business Park rooftop solar project that will bring them \$2.5 million a year in income. It's the second Six Nations rooftop solar farm. Six Nations Natural Gas Co., have been operating its own rooftop solar farm for more than two years. (Photo by Donna Duric)**

doing its part for climate change," she said. "Six Nations is a leader in renewable energy. We're very proud of that."

Green energy projects make up the bulk of Six Nations' economic development projects.

Band Council has partnered with about 10 other companies on wind and solar projects on Six Nations' treaty lands in southern

Ontario, which will bring about \$100 million to the community over the next 20 years.

But the OBP project is historic in that it's the first public green energy project the band and Brant County have built on the reserve. All of band council's other green energy projects sit outside the reserve boundary.

"This is the first project that

is actually in the Six Nations community," said Hill.

The Six Nations Natural Gas Company have been operating a solar farm on their rooftop for more than two years.

Hill said she was "proud" of the partnership between Six Nations and Brant County.

"It's a good day for Six Nations," she said. "It's a good day for our community and

it's a good day for our partnership. Hopefully, we'll have many more partnerships. We're really proud of the partnership we have with Brant County."

Construction on the 500 kilowatt rooftop solar project began in May and was completed last month by Brant Renewable Energy and their contractor Neighbourhood Electric.

Six Nations has a 90 per cent ownership stake in the project. Brant County holds 10 per cent of the equity.

Six Nations people were employed to complete the installation of the solar panels.

"We are pleased to maximize the utility of land already developed at Oneida Business Park," said Hill.

"This is an opportunity to demonstrate our on-going commitment to clean energy, and a much-needed source of revenue to help fund future community needs. We appreciate Brant County's foresight in looking to Six Nations as an important partner within the region."

Brant County Mayor Ron

Eddy said, "This partnership project is an excellent example of the economic, social and environmental benefits that can be created when two communities work together for the common good. We look forward to future partnership opportunities with Six Nations. Finally, we're doing the right thing. We're progressing for the benefit of both communities."

Brantford-Brant Conservative MP Phil McColeman says the project signals a "bright future" between Six Nations and Brant County, who had previously clashed on development projects on unceded Six Nations lands in the area.

Brantford-Brant Liberal MPP Dave Levac said Six Nations and Brant County learned to "play in the sandbox together." "This is a perfect example of those adults that came together and said, 'it's time take a different track' because the stuff we were doing before - it wasn't working. You've got the answer. You've succeeded in an entire partnership."