

**Tom Mitchell**

**President and CEO  
Ontario Power Generation**

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**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kitchener's Electrification**

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**November 4, 2010  
Kitchener, Ontario**

**Subject to change upon delivery**

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## **NOTES FOR REMARKS**

Thank you for coming to help us celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the electrification of Kitchener.

I'm especially pleased that Kitchener acting mayor [Christina] Weylie could join us today.

I'm also pleased to welcome Niagara Regional Councillor, Barbara Greenwood, whose grandfather – Charles Sheppard -- threw the switch 100 years ago to “electrify” Kitchener.

We're proud to be sponsoring this event, along with our partner -- Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro.

The City of Kitchener (which as you know was called “Berlin” until 1916) has played an historic role in the development of Ontario's electricity industry.

Kitchener was the site of the famous “Berlin Convention,” in 1903, which laid the foundation for the creation of our predecessor company – Ontario Hydro.

Kitchener was also a charter member of the Ontario Municipal Electrical Association (created in 1912) which played a key role in the advancement of electricity in this Province.

And in 1956, Kitchener hosted Ontario Hydro's Golden Jubilee celebrations, which marked the company's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a public utility. Close to 800 guests attended this event, held at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium.

Recently Kitchener celebrated another major milestone in its history.

One hundred years ago, it became the first city in Ontario to receive 110,000 volts electricity generated from Niagara Falls, more than 100 miles away.

I can only imagine the excitement felt on that day back on October 11, 1910.

They say over 8,000 people came to watch the “switch-on” ceremony – including the future Prime Minister of Canada, Mackenzie King.

There’s no question it was an important event.

Like many southern Ontario towns back then, Kitchener was growing.

People needed reliable, affordable power to operate factories and businesses, light their homes and service their farms.

With one flick of a switch, Kitchener got that power.

At the time, it was considered something of a miracle that so much electricity could travel so far.

But it wasn’t a miracle. It was the result of the vision and determination of one man.

That man was Adam Beck, the founder the Hydroelectric Power Commission of Ontario – OPG’s first predecessor company.

Adam Beck is someone I admire a great deal.

I’ve even gone so far as to bring with me one of his most notable personal possessions.

I'm holding in my hand the very sword Adam Beck wore the day he was knighted by King George V in 1914.

The sword was loaned to OPG for this occasion by Hydro One; and I thank Hydro One for their generosity in making it available to us.

As you can see, it's a beautiful piece and would probably fetch a good price on EBAY or the Antiques Road Show.

But you can't measure the value of this sword in dollars.

It's the symbolic value that matters.

This sword is about service and achievement.

Adam Beck achieved much.

He built a transmission system capable of delivering 110,000 volts of electricity to Kitchener and 13 other Ontario cities over a distance of 100 miles. This was a first for the Canadian electricity industry and a first for Ontario. They said it couldn't be done, but Beck and his engineers did it.

A few years later, he did something even more impressive. He built the world's largest hydroelectric generating station at the time. It's our Beck I plant at Niagara Falls. Since 1922, it's been producing clean, renewable hydropower. It will continue to do so for decades to come.

Beck's other great achievement was to make people really see the value that electricity could provide to their daily lives.

He understood the connection between people and electricity. He travelled across Ontario in his famous “Hydro Circus,” introducing rural folks to a host of labour-saving devices – everything from electric stoves to milking machines and power saws.

At the end of the day, people were sold on electricity because Beck took the time to show them its promise.

And he delivered on that promise.

By 1919, the number of Ontario municipalities served by Ontario Hydro had grown from one to 252.

As more customers were added and more electricity assets built, the price of power dropped. New advances in technology also helped to lower prices.

In short, Adam Beck electrified Ontario.

Through his efforts, the power of Niagara was extended far beyond the immediate vicinity of the Falls themselves – bringing the benefits of electricity to many corners of the Province. This helped lay the foundation for Kitchener’s and Ontario’s success for years to come.

This anniversary is very much a celebration of that success.

But anniversaries do more than just look back at the past. They provide an opportunity for us to look forward to the future.

Over the next decade, Ontario faces a task almost as challenging as the one faced by Adam Beck.

Speaking as the CEO of Ontario’s public generating company, I can tell you that much of our electricity infrastructure, representing thousands of megawatts, is aging.

It has to be replaced. It has to be revitalized. It has to be made greener. This includes transmission as well as generation.

Significant investments – worth billions of dollars -- will be required for the task.

Through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, economies of scale enabled us to produce more power at lower cost.

Today, it's different.

Ontario's power system is mature. There are fewer opportunities to achieve significant economies of scale.

The challenge now is to maintain and transform the system in a cost effective manner.

At OPG, the process of fundamentally transforming our generation fleet has already begun.

- We have major new hydroelectric projects underway in Niagara Falls and in Northern Ontario.
- We're also exploring the possibility of repowering some of our coal-fired thermal units with natural gas or biomass.
- In nuclear, we're planning for the refurbishment of our Darlington nuclear station. We're investing in the continued operation, for the next four to six years, of our Pickering B station. And we're continuing with processes for an environmental assessment and a site preparation licence for two new nuclear units at our Darlington site.

These are all major projects for us.

And we're not the only ones doing this.

Organizations like Hydro One, Bruce Power and others – including the Ontario Government -- are involved in projects of similar scope and scale.

Adam Beck began the process of electrifying Ontario 100 years ago – starting with Kitchener.

Today, we are entering a new era – one that builds on his great legacy and that of his successors.

OPG looks forward to being part of this new era.

We look forward to providing value for the service we deliver – by generating electricity that is safe, reliable and produced in an environmentally responsible and cost-effective manner.

Equally important, we look forward to demonstrating to the people of Kitchener-Waterloo – and communities across Ontario – that the electricity we produce benefits their lives in tangible and positive ways.

In Adam Beck's time, people had no problem seeing how electricity could make their lives better.

I want people to continue to make that connection today and will work to make it happen.

All of you have so much to be proud of.

This area is one of the most dynamic and successful regions in Ontario.

You have excellent schools – including the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College.

You have great technology companies – like Research in Motion, Open Text and Christie Digital Systems. These and other high tech firms have made the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge Triangle one of the world’s great technology clusters.

This is also a financial services centre. Companies like Manulife and Sun Life call this area home.

Not to mention sectors such as food products, communications, and energy. Babcock & Wilcox - - one of the electricity industry’s and OPG’s most important suppliers – is located in nearby Cambridge.

And a few kilometres down the road in Stratford, is one of North America’s premier cultural institutions – the Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

You know your region far better than I do, but even to a casual observer Kitchener-Waterloo and the surrounding area is a great place to live and work.

None of this success could have happened without electricity. None of this success can be sustained or enlarged without electricity.

We cannot take this essential commodity for granted.

Electricity and its providers helped build Kitchener. We helped build southern Ontario. We helped build this great Province.

It’s a story of success that has been going on for more than 100 years....and much of it started right here in Kitchener.

I have every confidence electricity will continue to build a better society for all of us in the years ahead.

Thank you again for sharing this day with us.

And congratulations to the people of Kitchener for the important contribution your city has made to the history and growth of Ontario.

It is now my great pleasure to present to Acting Mayor Weylie with a token of our appreciation.

On behalf of OPG, I'm pleased to present you with this framed collection of three photos.

Each photo shows a different scene, taken on the day of Kitchener's "electrification" on October 11, 1910.

Wherever they are displayed, we hope they remind people of this important event and of Kitchener's historic role in the development of Ontario's electricity industry.