

## King of rooftop solar energy



**King of rooftop solar energy.** Canadian Solar president Milfred Hammerbacher describes the technology. *photo submitted*  
**Greg MacDonald, Times Staff**

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Cambridge is now home to the country's biggest rooftop solar energy system.

More than 1,300 solar panels have been installed on top of the building at 1139 Industrial Rd., which houses the Cambridge Greyhound stop among other companies.

Manufactured by the company Canadian Solar, the rooftop panels will create 250 kilowatts of power that will be sold into the city's energy grid.

It's the biggest solar venture in the country so far, but Canadian Solar president Milfred Hammerbacher believes that won't be the case for long.

"It likely won't be the biggest for very long," Hammerbacher said while unveiling the system at a press conference Tuesday. "We've got some bigger ones on the drawing board. But for today, it's the biggest."

Canadian Solar hosted a tour of the rooftop on Tuesday, revealing seemingly unending rows of panels on top of the building.

And for what the company calls a revolutionary development, the technology is fairly simple.

The solar panels sit on steel racks weighed down by patio stones. And the panels themselves, while guaranteed to last for 20 years, should last must longer, Hammerbacher said.

“They’re just made of glass but they can take a lot of weight,” he said.

“If I had better balance, I could get up and dance on them,” Hammerbacher added, motioning to the panels, which were tilted towards the south to capture more sunlight.

The big concern is wind and blowing over the panels. That’s where the patio stones come in – they’re a cheap solution for what could be a big problem, especially given the number of panels on the roof.

The rationale behind the scope of the project has to do with a provincial incentive program under the Green Energy Act.

The province is giving incentives to renewable energy such as solar. That could have a transformative effect on the Ontario energy landscape, Hammerbacher said.

“It shows how the government and private enterprise can work together to do something that can make a big difference in our province,” he said.

Tuesday’s announcement was jumping the gun a bit – the project has yet to receive provincial approval. Hammerbacher is confident that approval will come.

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