

# Greening our businesses

Cheryl Keetch and Kathy Lindsay  
Bonnechere River Watershed Project

News - Five years ago, when Dave and Warren LaRocque began the planning for their new George Jackson Toyota dealership in Horton Township, their goal was to not only build a facility that would service their needs but also to buy and hire locally, help serve their community, and minimize their environmental impact.

A particularly impressive feature of their facility is the water management system.

Run-off from the parking lots, roofs, agricultural tile drains from surrounding fields and a meandering grassed waterway system, drains into a holding pond – complete with cattails, frogs and birds.

In addition to wildlife habitat, the pond provides water for firefighting for the dealership and for the Township of Horton, made accessible through a fire hydrant installed along the road.

A surface well adjacent to the holding pond is used for washing vehicles, and as another emergency water source.

Unlike most dealerships, every effort is being made to minimize impervious surfaces by using paving stone and gravel instead of asphalt and concrete.

Grey water from the dealership is kept separate from septage and is pumped into an innovative raised and aerated septic bed for infiltration into groundwater.

In the winter, plowed snow is stockpiled in a location that allows for a slow spring melt that recharges groundwater and the holding pond.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions contributing to our changing climate has also been a priority.

In the outdoor lot, innovative and environmentally friendly LED lighting, while costing 50 to 100 per cent more to install, reduces electricity use and has a much longer lifespan than conventional lighting.

The lights are manufactured in North America and activated by timers to provide illumination only when necessary, and are dark sky compliant to further reduce light pollution.

The building features an energy efficient closed loop ground-source geothermal heating and cooling sys-



tem – the only one in a commercial building in Eastern Ontario – built and installed by local companies.

The building has also been ‘greened’ by having triple insulation, energy efficient indoor lighting, a light coloured roof to reduce summer heating, heat re-claimers in the ventilation system, and a one-inch space between the garage and the main showroom for fire suppression.

Recycled and re-purposed materials are also being used.

Surplus sea containers were purchased, re-painted to blend in with the natural surroundings, and placed away from the main building as storage pods for off-season tires and hazardous materials.

The pods are designed to provide a wind-break and to allow for quick removal of individual containers in case of fire. Two containers at the rear doors also act as windbreaks and storage.

Metal recycling is creatively and efficiently handled by filling an ‘end of life’ vehicle with scrap metal from the garage, then the entire vehicle and its contents recycled.

Customer service is also going green. Plans are in the works for the creation of an outdoor ‘waiting room’ and children’s play structure, and a walking trail through the property for customers and the general public alike.

Dave and Warren La Rocque have made an outstanding effort to green their business and serve their community at the same time. George Jackson Toyota was also the first sponsor of the Bonnechere River Watershed Project – Stone Fence Theatre co-production, *Bonnechere River: Future Tense*, which has its grand finale as a dinner theatre at the Horton Community Centre on Aug. 23.

See the BRWP website of [www.BonnechereRiver.ca](http://www.BonnechereRiver.ca) for details.



CHERYL KEETCH/BONNECHERE RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

Warren and Dave LaRocque of George Jackson Toyota with Kathy Lindsay, chair of the BRWP, standing beside the holding pond on the property.



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