



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

September 19, 2007  
For Immediate Release

### **Thunder Bay Hydro Changes Focus for Tree Trimming**

Thunder Bay, ON – Residents in the city may notice a change in the way that Thunder Bay Hydro is keeping power lines clear. Contractors will be proactively going into neighbourhoods to trim and remove trees around power lines based on risk assessments performed by a new on-staff forester position.

“We have over thirteen hundred kilometers of overhead power lines in this city and a majority of them are flanked by trees. Some of these are maturing and reaching the end of their life cycle and others are simply so large that their branches are rubbing the wires,” states Mike Dixon, Forester for Thunder Bay Hydro. “In some areas, every time the wind comes up, we expect to see a power outage because of trees. Proactive trimming has eliminated weather related outages on some stretches, but we need to do more. We have now identified higher risk neighbourhoods where we will begin proactive trimming. Our priority will be to protect system reliability and provide safety.”

Whenever possible, residents are notified of work being done in their neighbourhood. It is expected that the response from homeowners will be mixed. Some understand the safety implications but others may react more emotionally to trees that are considered part of their home.

Thunder Bay Hydro is committed to using recognized arboricultural standards for clearing trees in proximity to hydro wires. The practice of ‘topping’ trees has been stopped. To provide safe clearance, trees growing into the wires may have to be trimmed on one side or in the middle or even removed, when survival would be threatened.

Many power lines run in between the backs of houses. In order to do the work efficiently with the least amount of intrusion on back yards and established parklands, equipment is being employed that can maneuver within spaces with as little as thirty six inches of clearance.

Ontario utilities have legislative authority to maintain electrical system reliability and have the legal right to enter the property and trim or remove trees. “But, the issue cannot be tackled working in isolation,” says Dixon. Consultation with others who are interested in the greening of the city is ongoing.

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## **Thunder Bay Hydro Changes Focus cont'd**

Shelley Vescio, City Forester for the City of Thunder Bay is aware of the issue. She notes that “Good planning plays a role in how the maturing of trees will affect power lines. The city has modified its practices with the type and height of trees that we are planting under hydro lines. You will be seeing more trees such as lilacs on boulevards with overhead power lines.”

For more information, the Thunder Bay Hydro website has been updated with information about tree trimming issues. Visit [www.tbhydro.com](http://www.tbhydro.com)

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*Background information to follow*

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Utility Access Legislation**

Electricity Act, 1998

A transmitter or distributor may enter any land for the purpose of cutting down or removing trees, branches or other obstructions if, in the opinion of the transmitter or distributor, it is necessary to do so to maintain the safe and reliable operation of its transmission or distribution system. 1998, c. 15, Sched. A, s. 40 (4).

### **Tree Replacements**

Thunder Bay Hydro will not replace trees that have been removed due to poor selection of planting location.

Easements are granted at the time of residential development to allow access for utility companies. For properties that contain utility easements, Thunder Bay Hydro requests that homeowners not plant trees or otherwise encroach on easements in a manner that will limit access or interfere with operation of the lines.

Planning graphs are available online or by visiting Thunder Bay Hydro's Customer Service area at 34 N. Cumberland Street.

### **Mini Arborist Machine**

The machine base will fit through a 36 inch garden gate. The base is approximately 10 feet long and 28 inches high. The standard power for the base and aerial device will be a 13 HP Honda gasoline engine driving a hydraulic pump and electric generator.

### **City of Thunder Bay Public Property Planting Guidelines**

Bylaw 008-205 states "4.01 Approval of Planting Public Trees: Any person who wishes to plant a Tree on Municipal Property, making it a Public Tree by definition, must apply to the Manager for permission to do so. Approval by the Manager will include the planting location, species, and source of stock, size and condition."

A limited selection of boulevard trees are viable for our climate. For larger planting areas where there are no overhead wire restrictions, the following species may be considered: Linden, White Birch, Silver Maple, Bur Oak, Ash. For smaller planting areas, these species may be considered: Lilac, Amur Chokecherry, Amur Maple. The selection of species is made with the Parks Division.