

REPORT: SolarCity Canadian Suppliers Forum

Niagara College, Glendale Campus
November 3rd 2015 – 14:00 –to- 20:30

This was an initiative of the Canadian Consulate NY, Presence office in Buffalo, represented by Nathalie Niedoba, Consul & Head of Investment, Consulate General of Canada, NY; and, Linda Soltis, Trade Commissioner, CCGNY, Buffalo Presence; in cooperation with the Niagara Industrial Association [NIA], Wendy Smith; Niagara College and, Niagara Economic Development [NED].

Niagara/Canadian companies with the potential to participate in the SolarCity Supply Chain were invited to attend the session.

The number of participants in the Plenary Session was: ±40 [*to be confirmed by Wendy Smith*] 74 in attendance

Synopsis

The SolarCity Canadian Suppliers Forum was held to introduce potential Canada-based suppliers to the SolarCity Manufacturing Facility/Project, now under construction in Buffalo, NY.

Companies [potential suppliers] submitted profiles in advance via NIA and the Canadian Consulate Presence Office in Buffalo, to Vinayak Gupta, V.P. Supply Chain for SolarCity.

SolarCity/Vinayak selected 6 companies for one-on-one meetings to explore the potential for those companies to supply the Buffalo operation.

It was reported, by Vinayak, that 4 of the 6 companies were found to have high potential supply capabilities – and follow-up will be continued with those 4 companies. The other two companies were found to have no compatibility with SolarCity's supply train needs.

The 4 companies selected were not revealed by Vinayak yesterday. We know from feedback from the principals of the firm that WP Warehousing is one that was selected.

Prior to the open plenary session in the afternoon, Mr. Gupta was hosted to a luncheon with CanSIA VP, Wes Johnston; Chris Benedetti, Principal, Sussex Strategy Group; Steve Hudson, VP Academic, Niagara College; Nathalie Niedoba and Linda Soltis

Agenda/Program Overview

The program was kicked off by Steve Hudson, V.P Academic, Niagara College

The program was chaired by Jo Deman, Director, Business Development Committee of NIA; and, Principal, CTI Global, ED Products

Wesley Johnston, V.P., Canadian Solar Industries Association [CanSIA] provided a very informative presentation on the current and projected future solar industry in Canada. I've asked Wes for a copy of his PowerPoint presentation, and he has promised to forward it to us via Linda Soltis.

Guest of Honour, Vinayak Gupta, provided a combination video and PowerPoint overview of SolarCity and the SolarCity project in Buffalo. The Buffalo operation is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2016, and delivering product in early 2017.

- All of the production of solar panels at this plant [projected to be 10,000/day at peak], will be absorbed internally by SolarCity
- SolarCity is the world's largest solar panel manufacturer
- Mr. Gupta indicated he is very open to utilizing Canadian suppliers for the operation of the Buffalo facility.
- SolarCity's Supply Chain shopping list is highlighted by the following items:
 - Gases/Chemicals
 - Aluminum/Copper (aluminum is a particular need)
 - Extrusion stamping (anodizing)
 - Solar Glass (back sheet boxes)

- Tapes, Plastics, Labels
- Logistics

The open session was followed by a reception in the Benchmark Restaurant. This allowed the companies in attendance, particularly those that did not get selected in the preliminary interview list, to establish a contact with Vinayak Gupta. It was made clear that SolarCity is not finished with their supply chain recruiting process – and he encouraged Canadian companies to contact him directly to indicate their capabilities.

A smaller dinner was held at the Benchmark, following the reception. The dinner involved:

- o Vinayak Gupta SolarCity
- o Bob Seguin NED
- o Joe Deman CTI/Ed Products, NIA Board Member
- o Domenic Ursini Vice-Chair, NIA; Commercial
Development Banker, BDC
- o Wendy Smith NIA
- o Nathalie Niedoba CCGNY
- o Linda Soltis CCGNY
- o Steve Hudson Niagara College
- o Mischeck Mwaba Niagara College
- o Wesley Johnston CanSIA
- o Chris Benedetti Sussex Strategy Group
- o Tim Reynolds NED

Summary

This was considered by all to be a very successful undertaking for the CCGNY, NIA, Niagara College and NED.

Vinayak Gupta is a very receptive 'to Canadian suppliers' head of supply chain for the SolarCity operation currently under construction in Buffalo.

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