

Environmental Achievement Award

Leduc Lions Club

Winner of the 2021 Environmental Achievement Award, the Leduc Lions Club lives by its motto: "We Serve." Operating in Leduc since 1946, the club puts all of the funds it raises towards charitable and community causes, supporting more than 30 organizations with over \$100,000 each year. Contributions include the skateboard park, an outdoor skating rink and \$200,000 towards the Leduc Community Hospital's CT scanner.

Committed to environmental sustainability, the club has undertaken several environmental initiatives, and in 2019 spearheaded a major solar energy project. Inspired by the Leduc Recreation Centre's solar power use, the club decided to invest in a ground-mounted solar installation on a piece of unused land next to the Leduc Lions Campground.

Club members Ted Fletcher, Greg Krischke and Mike Krischke championed the idea, commissioning a contractor to make a presentation to the club on the type of solar array that could be installed. The club approved the proposal, and undertook the bold and costly step of investing in the first major solar installation at an Alberta campground.

The solar array became operational in February 2020. With a footprint of just under an acre, the installation includes 648 solar panels generating 347 megawatts of electricity each year. The excess solar energy is sold to the grid, and the money earned is credited back to the club to offset the campground's costs and a portion of the installation costs each year. Originally forecasted to be paid off over 20 years, current projections indicate that it will pay for itself much sooner.

As of July 2022, the array has offset the equivalent of 864 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. Besides benefitting the environment directly, it has sparked local interest in renewable energy and raised the profile of the Leduc community's commitment to the environment.