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## **Yet another islands' solar project - Melinda Auerbach**

Lasqueti's Last Resort Society has announced that phase one of the micro-grid project that will electrify the Judith Fisher Centre campus has been completed and commissioned. Tim Peterson, president of the society says, 'It's wonderful to have such an amazing and powerful solar electric system for our Health Centre. The generosity of Trina Solar, Surrette Batteries, and S-5 means that the Judith Fisher Centre can fully function off-grid with minimal use of fossil fuels. Their contributions, along with \$48,000 from the BC Remote Communities Implementation Program, brought the system cost down by at least \$80,000. We are very grateful for their support. We also want to thank the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Fraser Basin Council, Islands Trust, and the Lasqueti Community Association for their help in making the grant funding possible.'

The 13.2 kW photovoltaic (PV) array supplied by Trina Solar, which is currently the largest on Lasqueti Island, will supply power to the Health Centre, an Elder Cottage (the first of six) and to the Lasqueti Internet Access Society—the island's own ISP. The projected load of 24 kWh a day will be supported by 90 kWh (2,400 Ah) of Surrette Batteries.

This unique property not only has distributed electricity through the micro-grid but it has a wood-fired, distributed heating system. John Martin, a retired heavy-duty mechanic who volunteers at the site says, 'I was the maintenance person at the school across the road, electricity there is supplied by two generators. We never could have considered distributed heating,

which depends on pumps, without the reliability and predictability that our new micro-grid offers. Using fossil fuels to power the pumps 24/7 would have been cost prohibitive.'

Karl Darwin, the volunteer project manager—almost all of the construction labour has been donated by members of the community—worked closely with Jarek Kubacki of Small Planet Energy during the installation and commissioning of the PV system. He says 'I've lived on this island all of my life which is more than six decades. I never expected to ever see a PV system powerful enough to run electric heaters but here we are drying out our services building by converting excess power, that is being generated by the PV array, into electric heat.'

James Surrette, President of Surrette Batteries says, 'Lasqueti Island typifies many of the small off-grid communities we work with around the world. People treasure their independence and learn to get things done on their own. When I learned that the Lasqueti Last Resort Society had already raised over seventy percent of their \$750,000 budget on their island of 400 permanent residents, I was confident that they would finish the project and that our contribution would make a real difference.'

The Lasqueti Last Resort Society continues to raise funds to complete the Judith Fisher Centre infrastructure, as well as to develop a sufficient revenue stream to operate the centre. To learn more about the project or to make a donation please visit [www.judithfishercentre.com](http://www.judithfishercentre.com). ☞

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