

INTELLIGENCE

Sun power

Standing next to a four-piece solar panel mounted on the rooftop of his home, Ron McKay scans his swath of Riverdale. "When I was up here getting it installed, I was looking at all the roofs, and I thought: 'What a lot of real estate.' "

Mr. McKay's unit, a 200-watt system, was state of the art when he joined a solar-power initiative organized by the late activist Tooker Gomberg five years ago.

Today, Mr. McKay is the driving force behind RISE (Riverdale Initiative for Solar Power), a localized push that encourages residents to bulk-buy solar panelling.

So far, from little more than word of mouth, 180 households have indicated interest in the alternative energy source.

A public information session, the first meeting of all interested parties, will take place at the Ralph Thornton Centre on March 28.

After contacting about 17 Ontario solar companies, RISE has inked a deal with Solera Sustainable Energies Company, which will offer one- and two-kilowatt systems at a discount exclusive to RISE.

Homeowners buying a two-kilowatt system, at \$17,847, will save 30 per cent on the regular purchase price — and roughly 30 per cent on their energy bills.

— Paul Carlucci