



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention: News & Business Editors

May 2010

### CITY READY FOR BLACKOUT

*Sommers ships a One Megawatt Trailer Standby Generator to Sault Ste. Marie for disaster relief project*

**SAULT STE. MARIE, ON** – In case of an emergency, the City of Sault Ste. Marie will be prepared if the lights go out as it recently took delivery of a One Megawatt Standby Generator as part of its disaster relief planning project.

The trailer mounted system, manufactured by Sommers Motor Generator Sales Ltd. based in Tavistock, Ontario, is housed in a 40 foot ISO trailer and will provide the city with a mobile power source for emergency and short-term use.

Nick Apostle, the Commissioner of Community Services for the city says the project is spearheaded through the Emergency Measures team which is comprised of fire and police departments, the Red Cross and city staff. The generator's primary application will be to power the Essar Centre. This 5,000 seat sports and entertainment centre in downtown Sault Ste. Marie has been designated as a disaster relief area, in the event of an emergency. Today, the Essar Centre's primary tenant is the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds of the Ontario Hockey League.

"The reason behind us acquiring the generator is so that we can fully power that entire centre in the event of a disaster in the city. It will act as a relief centre to help affected people, even feed them. The facility has a huge kitchen facility that can accommodate a few thousand people," says Apostle.

North America has witnessed its own unique natural disasters that have blacked out cities. This includes the 1998 ice storm in Quebec and eastern Ontario that caused massive damage to the electrical infrastructure leading to widespread long-term power outages. Millions were left in the dark for periods varying from days to weeks. In New Orleans, Louisiana, displaced people were housed at the Louisiana Superdome and the New Orleans Civic Center, which were used as evacuation centres, after Hurricane Katrina swept through the area in 2005.

#### **All systems powered up**

"It is not uncommon for us in northern Ontario to experience power outages," says Apostle, adding that they are not always caused by weather. On August 14, 2003, a series of power surges over a 12-second period triggered a cascade of shutdowns at more than 100 generating plants throughout eight U.S. states and Ontario. The result was the biggest blackout in North American history. 61,800 megawatts of power were lost to over 50 million people. "We were lucky that was only for 24 hours," he says.

If this scenario ever reoccurs, the city will be ready. And so will the Essar Centre. "We designed the centre so that it could be hooked up remotely after it was built. The intent going forward now is to design other facilities that we are building to be compatible with this particular generator hooked up to it, if the need arises," he says.

Ryan Crowle with EPOH Inc., the architect and engineering design firm that coordinated the bid process, says the original design of the Essar Centre included electrical switchgear in the building to accept a generator like this. "The generator can be pulled up to the Essar Centre and essentially plugged in. The facility would operate as if it wasn't disconnected from the electrical grid," says Crowle, adding that several codes and standards require a building like that to have a standard standby generator, but they are typically smaller units used to power life safety systems like hall and stairway lighting. "The Sommers generator will allow the entire community centre to operate normally with all systems powered up."

With the added feature of having the generator on a mobile trailer, many of the city's new buildings will also be designed to use the generator as an emergency power source. "The city has asked that we make provisions for this generator to connect to any future City of Sault Ste. Marie buildings so that it can be available, if needed," he says, adding that it is not common to see a 1 MW mobile standby generator in northern Ontario communities.

### **Compact and quiet**

"It was well thought out," says Crowle about the custom design build of the generator's trailer mounted system. The inside of the 40 foot ISO trailer has an acoustically lined interior with perforated aluminum and a formed checkered plate floor to aid with spill containment. The outside skin is galvaneal powder coated steel. It has a compartment in the front that houses the load cables. It's onboard fuel supply meets the Transport Canada regulation approval for a 3000 litre, double walled tank. Motorized ventilation louvers bring in cool air and let out the heat and the two side doors have a removable set of stairs. "It's a neat, self-contained compact package that's got everything it needs."

Crowle says several companies were vying for the contract when the tender went out, but the submission from Sommers Motor Generator Sales best met the criteria. With the Essar Centre's downtown location and its close proximity to a hospital, noise was a big factor in the city's decision to go with Sommers. "We specified sound attenuating insulation on the inside of it. We started it up and walked across the street and found that you can tell that it's running, but it is not obtrusive by any means. I was very surprised by how quiet it is," he says, adding that this is partly due to the engine.

"It uses Detroit's new 16 V and in my opinion, Detroit makes one of the best diesel engines on the market. The proposed engine was part of the reason why we went with the Sommers' tender.

Apostle agrees, stating that... "Sommers met all of the criteria in our tender. Not only did it have the low price coming in, but it seemed to have the best unit overall. We were really happy to have that kind of quality bid from them," says Apostle, adding that the generator's mobility also played a deciding factor. "Its mobility gives us the option to be able to use that generator elsewhere. If we didn't need it for disaster relief, we could always use it just to power the entire facility if the power goes out."

### **About Sommers**

Sommers is located in Tavistock, Ontario, and has been a trusted name in generating, delivering and applying electrical power for more than 70 years. Generator systems are their only business and, today, Sommers is the leading Canadian manufacturer of packaged generator systems for residential, commercial and industrial applications and has the largest privately held inventory of generators for sale or rent from 3 kW to 2 MW.

Along with the *Sommers Signature Series*, Sommers offers a complete range of customized standby, PTO and off-grid generator power solutions. As a generator specialist backed by proven technical experience and the country's most extensive aftermarket service and parts facilities, Sommers is the "Power House" to depend on in Canada.

For professional service, contact the authorized Sommers Generator Systems specialist in your area at 1-800-690-2396 or visit us online at [www.sommersgen.com](http://www.sommersgen.com).

**Photo Captions:**

**Photo A** – *The Essar Centre is just one of the many city's new buildings where the generator will be able to be "plugged in".*

**Photo B** – *1 MW generator with its Transport Canada approved 3000 litre double walled tank onboard.*

**Photo C** – *Control cabinet inside the trailer.*

**Photo D** – *Powered by 16 V Detroit Diesel.*