

Government modernizes King's radar weather station; 32 others

Weather services, such as weather and environmental prediction, are more important than ever in preparing for, and responding to, increasingly severe weather as a result of climate change. A robust and modern weather service is critical to protecting the health, safety, and property of Canadians. That is why, since 2016, Canada has invested \$180.4 million to install 32 state-of-the-art weather radars, and one training radar, across Canada. Environment and Climate Change Canada hosted a media tour of the new weather radar in King City Friday, to mark the completion of this eight-year project. This state-of-the-art and sustainable network is improving the department's ability to track severe weather events, such as tornadoes and hurricanes, at an extended range, and to issue earlier severe weather warnings. Weather radars are the primary tool used by our meteorologists to issue more precise and timely severe weather warnings. The coverage area of the new radars increased from just over one million square kilometres to over four million square kilometres, ensuring that 99 percent of Canadians live within 330 kilometres of a Canadian radar. The installation of these radars represents a significant advancement in weather forecasting technology. For example, the station in King, Ontario will give forecasters a greater ability to predict severe weather in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada's most populated urban centre. These radars provide an increase in frequency of data, with updates available every six minutes, instead of the previous 10-minute cycle. Weather information from these new radars will be used in almost every sector of the economy, including construction, health sciences, environmental management, agriculture, and transportation. The completion of the radar modernization project aligns with Canada's National Adaptation Strategy – a shared vision aimed at transforming the way governments and Canadians work together to reduce risks by taking action before disaster strikes. Early action to prepare for, and adapt to, the changing climate can build communities and economies that are able to thrive for generations to come. With the changing climate, it is essential to provide our meteorologists with the technology needed to issue the fastest and most accurate weather forecasts. This reliable, modern network of weather radars will give Canadians more lead time to take appropriate actions to protect themselves, their family, and their property from the effects of severe weather,” said Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. “A modern and reliable weather-forecasting system is essential to support our country's growing population. Projects such as this one not only strengthen our weather-prediction infrastructure and allow Canadians to be better prepared for weather events, but also create good jobs across the country. The Government of Canada saw this project through by working in an open, fair, and transparent manner that speaks to the benefits of our procurement process, and that also represents the best value for all Canadians,” added Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Public Services and Procurement. “In the face of increasingly frequent severe weather and climate extremes, Canadians are experiencing the impacts of climate change firsthand. Timely and accurate weather services are more important than ever in our preparedness and adaptation efforts. Investing in radars that are resilient and contemporary is not just a necessity, it's a cornerstone in keeping Canadians safe,” noted Adam van Koeverden, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. “We have all experienced the wild, unpredictable, and extreme weather that is hitting our communities with increasing frequency and ferocity in this time of climate change. Having a state-of-the-art weather station right here in King City will give greater reassurance to weather watchers all across the Greater Toronto Area, just as these new stations will help keep Canadians safer from coast to coast to coast,” said Leah Taylor Roy, MP for Aurora/Oak Ridges/Richmond Hill. “Climate Proof Canada applauds the federal government for investing in this tangible action toward the National Adaptation Strategy. With another record-breaking year of climate-related disasters looming, a better warning system for when and where these events will occur is critical to building climate-resilient communities. In 2023, an unprecedented number of individuals, households, and communities were displaced and faced barriers to recovery, including returning home, and lasting financial and mental health impacts. With advanced detection of severe weather, residents will be more able to prepare for severe weather, protect their homes, evacuate quickly if needed, and prioritize their safety,” stated Jason Clark, chair, Climate Proof Canada. The conventional radar range of the new radars has been extended from 250 kilometres to 330 kilometres. Weather radars are a key element in forecasting short-term severe weather, such as thunderstorms, tornadoes, hail, heavy rain, and ice storms. The first radar was installed in Radisson, Saskatchewan, in the fall of 2017. The final radar was installed on Halfmoon Peak, British Columbia, in the summer of 2023. Environment and Climate Change Canada continually works to optimize its weather and climate monitoring networks to ensure Canadians are provided with accurate and timely information to enable informed decision making.