

The Star Phoenix



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New book pays tribute
to Clint Eastwood

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Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

*Breaking news at TheStarPhoenix.com

City sets Parcel Y price

□ Land priced at \$5.2 million; developer ready to proceed

By David Hutton
of The StarPhoenix

It's been called Saskatoon's most valuable piece of property and now we know what city council thinks it's worth: \$5,240,494.

The city has reached an agreement on the price of Parcel Y with Lake Placid Developments, in partnership with Karim Nasser's

Victory Majors Investment Corp., one of the final steps toward the end of more than a year-and-a-half of delays, extensions and public drama for the city's most touted private development.

"We're ready, willing and able now to proceed with the \$200-million project," Lake Placid CEO Michael Lobsinger said Tuesday. "We have financing in place . . . and are ready to move dirt in June or July.

"We're going to be going forward with all phases of the project right away."

City council, sitting as an executive committee, made the decision in private Tuesday afternoon to advertise the land sale before it was announced at the evening council meeting. The sale still requires the blessing of city council on June 14 because the purchase is for less than market value.

At that meeting, those with objections to the

sale will be able to speak before city council takes a final vote.

The sale — for \$5.24 million — is \$5.76 million less than the \$11-million value arrived at by outside appraisal firms two months ago.

The city agreed to sell the prime riverfront land, across from the Remai Arts Centre, to Lake Placid once before — for \$4.8 million.

■ CONT'D: Please see Land/A2

Soggy spring for city



Red flag raised over bacteria level in bottled water

Please see story on Page A8

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Power to the people

Entrepreneurs get a charge out of solar powering device

By Vito Pilienci
Canwest News Service

OTTAWA — A pair of Ottawa entrepreneurs are hoping to revolutionize the way people charge up their cellular devices.

Sharif Higazy and his wife, Alia El Banna, have spent the past year designing a chocolate bar-sized device containing a battery that can be charged through a variety of means including solar energy.

The Kiwi U-Powered charger is designed to be a pocket-sized backup power source for portable devices.

The Kiwi folds out into something that looks like a camera tripod, which can be placed in a window or a car dashboard, exposing the solar panels.

The couple launched Kiwi Choice Inc. this week to market the product.

"This is the most versatile portable charger out there," said Higazy, Kiwi's vice-president of business development. "Once charged it holds its charge for six months. After that you can charge all of your mobile devices on-the-go."

El Banna serves as the company's chief executive officer.

While there is already intense competition in the cellphone charger space — including other solar charges as well as offerings from companies such as battery giant Energizer — Higazy notes the Kiwi U-Powered charger can replenish power supplies from solar energy in less than 17 hours. The device can be charged in less than four hours using an electrical socket or with an auto cigarette lighter adapter.

The device, which costs \$49.99, holds enough energy to charge an iPhone twice, and charges almost any cellular device using a Universal Serial Bus port. Kiwi Choice said the device should last for up to five years before it needs to be replaced.

Higazy said the device was developed through a partnership with an Asian manufacturing firm. Kiwi used the Asian firm's technol-

ogy, but the design work was done in Ottawa.

Higazy said the U-Powered charger is now available at Kiwi's website, www.kiwichoice.com, and he is negotiating deals with retailers such as Best Buy and Amazon.

Always been a fan of solar energy technologies, Higazy has long been thinking about ways to use them in everyday life. Higazy said it was about a year ago that he and his wife began design work on the U-Powered charger.

He said Kiwi will soon be releasing other consumer charging tools and technologies. He said the company will be announcing its next line of products in June.

While Kiwi is headquartered in Ottawa, the company's manufacturing base is in China and its distribution services are in Sacramento, California.

Kiwi has about a half-dozen employees. It is privately held and so far is largely funded by Higazy and El Banna.

Higazy said he expects to sell around 100,000 U-Powered charger devices this year and he hopes to close a round of financing, which will help the company expand its product portfolio.

(OTTAWA CITIZEN)



—Canwest News Service

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