

## CITIZENS TAKING ACTION



NORA PENHALE The Observer

Sue Grant, left, and Carol Chudy, are members of a newly-formed citizen group, Clean Affordable Energy Alliance, which is fighting closure of the Lambton Generating Station near Courtright.

# Group fights LGS closure

## LOBBY WORKS TO SAVE LOCAL PLANT

By GEORGE MATHEWSON  
The Observer

A citizen's group has sprung up to fight the closure of the Lambton Generating Station.

The Clean Affordable Energy Alliance has launched a website and begun lobbying politicians to save the coal-fired plant at Courtright.

Sue Grant, one of the organizers, said the Ontario government's decision to phase out coal by 2007 will not only cost jobs, it will saddle homeowners, businesses and schools

with higher electricity costs.

"People will say, 'Oh, you're just trying to save your husband's job,' said Grant, whose husband Mark is an electrician at the station.

"But he can go to another OPG plant. We will survive. It's the people like my in-laws on a fixed income who won't be able to pay their utility bills we're concerned about."

The citizen group, which began meeting five weeks ago, is part of a growing backlash that has seen labour groups and municipal leaders speak out in frustration over the Liberal government's energy policy.

The CAE Alliance is organizing a pro-coal campaign that includes brochures and a website at [www.caealliance.com](http://www.caealliance.com)

with statistical ammunition.

What really irks Grant is the impact that higher electricity prices could have on Lambton's industry-based economy if coal is replaced by more expensive natural gas-fired generation.

To replace LGS, Ontario has approved construction of gas-fired power plants in Courtright and Corunna, which will be privately owned and operated by American and Japanese interests.

"The money is not even going to stay here," said Grant, a mother of four graduating this month from a Lambton College nursing program.

Grant said she isn't sure her group can make a difference. The McGuinty government

appears intent on closing LGS to show it can keep an election promise, she said.

"Unfortunately, most Canadians don't pay attention until it hits them in the pocketbook. But maybe we can save another (coal) plant in another city."

Though encouraged by the political support from Sarnia, St. Clair Township and Lambton County, the group is disappointed by the response from Sarnia-Lambton MPP Caroline Di Cocco, Grant said.

Di Cocco couldn't be reached for comment Friday.

The MPP has said in the past she backs the coal phase-out for environmental reasons but wants the Lambton plant converted to gas-fired generation.