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The Power of Change™

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Texas State Technical College Harlingen and Green Mountain Energy Company "Flip Switch" on Valley's Newest Solar Array

Dedication held today at TSTC for Valley's first Solar System donated by Green Mountain Energy Company

HARLINGEN, Texas – Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Harlingen is now partly powered by the sun, thanks to Green Mountain Energy Company. Texas' only electric provider dedicated to cleaner energy donated a solar array system to the school — one of the largest arrays in the Rio Grande Valley. It will help reduce the school's carbon footprint and energy costs, and be used as a teaching tool for several classes.

The Green Mountain Energy® Solar at Texas State Technical College Harlingen is a 10.08-kilowatt (kW) solar system mounted on the grounds adjacent to the school's Autobody Collision Technology Building, facing Loop 499. It is the first array funded and built by Green Mountain in the Valley and TSTC Harlingen's first solar array for the campus. The TSTC campus is located at 1902 North Loop 499.

Green Mountain's Super Earth Mascot; Green Mountain representatives; Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell; Senator Eddie Lucio Jr.; State Rep. Eddie Lucio 111; State Rep. Tara Rios Ybarra; City Commissioners Larry Galbreath and Joey Trevino; Dr. Cesar Maldonado, President of TSTC Harlingen; Nora Castaneda, TSTC Board of Regent; students and employees attended the dedication event officially "flipping the switch" of the array. Additionally, during today's ceremony, Mayor Chris Boswell proclaimed September 4, 2009, as Green Mountain Energy® Solar at TSTC Day. He urged Harlingen citizens and businesses to learn more about green power and to engage in other activities that encourage the use of clean, abundant, reliable, and renewable energy.

The solar array is 861 square feet. It was built with 60 large photovoltaic (PV) solar panels that convert sunlight into electricity and will produce over 13,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of clean energy annually. It is estimated that the solar array will save the college more than \$300,000 in electricity costs over its 30-year lifetime. Additionally, it will offset almost 27,000 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) annually, which has the same environmental impact of not driving a car more than 29,000 miles. CO₂ is a greenhouse gas that is a leading contributor of global warming.

"Green Mountain Energy Company is proud to partner with Texas State Technical College Harlingen, an organization that is dedicated to education and helping to promote the benefits of renewable energy," said Vanessa Montelongo, CEO Adviser, Green Mountain Energy Company. "Green Mountain is committed to Harlingen and the Rio Grande Valley. Donating solar systems like this helps us give back to the communities where our customers and employees live, work, and attend school, while supporting our mission to change the way power is made."

(more)

Green Mountain funded the TSTC Harlingen solar array through its Big Texas Sun Club®, a unique program in which its Texas customers can choose to support solar energy installations in the state by paying an additional \$5 on their monthly electric bill (for information, visit www.bigtexassunclub.com). This is the 18th solar project built thanks to the support of *Big Texas Sun Club* members. With this installation, Green Mountain's *Big Texas Sun Club* will be responsible for creating over 176 kW of new solar energy capacity in Texas since 2002.

"TSTC is committed to the establishment of two renewable energy programs in Solar Technology and Wind Technology," said Al Guillen, associate vice president of Academic Affairs. "The Green Mountain Energy array will be used for educational purposes so we invite the community to come by and tour the area to see how the array is used and the benefits it provides. The array also will support the soon to be offered Solar Technology Program as students will study the installation, measure the output and perform maintenance on it as required."

Guillen credited Dr. Sarah Merrill, a philosophy professor who also sponsors the Environmental Club on campus, for taking the independent initiative to submit the solar energy grant proposal to Green Mountain Energy Company. He added, "We are grateful and proud that one of our valued professors acted as a role model to students by taking action to benefit our college and our planet."

The solar system will help educate TSTC students about the benefits of solar energy and the technical aspects of installing an array. A sign about the array and information about solar energy will be placed at the intersection of Loop 499 and Raintree St. A monitoring web site will also be linked to the array to display real-time energy output data that anyone with Internet access can view.

College Provost Pat Hobbs said that the Solar Energy Program and Wind Energy Programs at TSTC would be part of the South Texas Renewable Energy Institute. The initiative will include studies and research related to green construction, corrosion and other modern technologies involving energy conservation or alternative forms of energy production.

About Texas State Technical College Harlingen

With an enrollment of more than 6,000 students, TSTC grants diplomas in more than 30 programs across its Industrial-Manufacturing, Computer Information Systems and Allied Health divisions. It also offers a 48-credit Academic Core package of basic courses transferable to all four-year public universities in Texas. For more information, go online to www.harlingen.tstc.edu or phone the College Information Office at 800.852.8784, ext. 4117, or 956.364.4117.

About Green Mountain Energy Company

Green Mountain, the nation's leading provider of cleaner energy and carbon offset solutions, was founded in 1997 "to change the way power is made." The company is the longest serving green power marketer in the U.S. Green Mountain offers consumers and businesses the choice of cleaner electricity products from renewable sources such as wind and water and carbon offset products. Green Mountain customers have collectively helped avoid over 4.9 million tons of CO₂ emissions. For more information, visit www.GreenMountain.com.