



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 7/18/14

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DARTMOUTH SOLAR CHALLENGE CELEBRATES FIRST INSTALLATION

Southcoast Energy Challenge is pleased to announce the first solar photovoltaic (PV) installation of the town-sponsored Dartmouth Solar Challenge, which launched at the end of March. "We are thrilled that the first panels are installed and producing green energy and we're looking forward to many, many more," said Karen Stewart, Assistant Director of the Challenge.

The Dartmouth Solar Challenge provides a streamlined process to help residents adopt photovoltaic (PV) electricity for their home. "The fact that Dartmouth vetted the installer helped make the process easier for us," said Donna and Jack Martin, the new owners of the solar PV array. "We've thought about solar for years, talked to installers at home shows, even had them at the house, but no one could explain the solar renewable energy certificates (SRECS) like Artie could. We heard Artie Leonard of RGS Energy at the Solar 101 at the Southworth Library and he was extremely informative. There was a lot of discussion and interaction with the audience, especially from one man who already had solar and could speak from his experience," said the Martins. "When Artie came to our house, he spent 4 or 5 hours

with us, explaining the incentives and federal tax credits with such clarity we signed the contract.”

SRECs or Solar Renewable Energy Certificates are a performance-based incentive for solar PV installations that are purchased (not leased), and offers residents a way to help pay for the system. Solar PV owners can generate income from the sale of Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs), which represent the positive environmental attributes of the clean energy produced by a solar PV system. SRECs are tradable certificates that are issued to owners of solar PV systems at a rate of 1 SREC per megawatt-hour (1,000 kWh) generated. The income from SRECs can be considerable, depending on how much electricity the system generates.

The Martins have a large system with 34 panels that took 3 days to install. “The installation was very thorough, very professional, and the crew was very intelligent. The wiring is so neatly done, it’s worthy of a photo,” observed Jack Martin. “We’ve been wanting to go solar for a long time,” noted his wife Donna. “We’re empty nesters now and the array is sized to cover 100 percent of our usage.

We wanted to do our share for the environment and our kids are impressed,” she said. “Yes, “ adds Jack, “It’s the way of the future and, environmentally, it’s the right thing to do.”

The Dartmouth Solar Challenge is a community savings program administered by the nonprofit Southcoast Energy Challenge using the expertise of the full-service

solar company RGS Energy to assist residents in choosing clean affordable energy. The Dartmouth Solar Challenge is a limited time offer and to take advantage of the incentives and rebates, commitments must be made by July 31, 2014. To sign up for a free solar site assessment for your Dartmouth home, please call the Southcoast Energy Challenge at (508) 910-1871 or visit **DartmouthSolarChallenge.org**.

SouthCoast Energy Challenge is a program of the Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL). SEEAL is a coalition of 25 of the region's core environmental organizations. It was established by the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts in 1997 and is the Foundation's longest-running program fund.

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