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For immediate release

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Laurens Electric Cooperative dedicates Upstate's first Green Power Solar School

Laurens Electric Cooperative announced the dedication of Upstate South Carolina's first Green Power Solar School project today at Mauldin Middle School.

The Green Power Solar School program is designed to encourage interest in the environment and demonstrate the feasibility and limitations of renewable power generation. Laurens Electric, in partnership with its wholesale power provider Santee Cooper installed a 2-kilowatt solar power system at Mauldin Middle School, which provides a teaching, research and hands-on demonstration opportunity for the sixth grade students there.

"Today is the beginning of a dynamic educational project that I know will make a difference in our students' future," said R. M. Singletary, Sr. Vice President of Corporate Services at Santee Cooper. "I thank Laurens Electric Cooperative and Greenville County Schools for their environmental leadership."

Members of Mauldin's City Council and Chamber of Commerce, Greenville's County Council, and the Greenville County School Board, including Dr. Phinnize J. Fisher, Superintendent of Greenville County Schools joined Mauldin Middle School Principal Rosia Gardner to commemorate the event.

Guest speakers included Senator David Thomas (Greenville Co. Senate District #8), House Representative Bruce Bannister (Greenville Co. House District #24) and House Representative Eric Bedingfield (Greenville Co. House District #28).

"The opportunity to provide hands-on teaching and learning at Mauldin Middle School allows students to gain valuable experiences in the areas of conservation and alternative energy," said Superintendent Dr. Phinnize J. Fisher. "We are grateful to Laurens Electric Cooperative for providing students and staff with innovative teaching methods that will improve our quality of life today and in the future."

The primary focus of the project is the use of a new renewable energy curriculum which meets South Carolina science standards. The school has been provided an Internet based monitoring system that provides real-time access to information regarding the system's performance from any Internet-enabled computer.



Laurens Electric Cooperative dedicated Mauldin Middle School's newly installed solar panel as part of the Green Power Solar Schools project.

Photo credit: Laurie Riser

“This partnership is a great opportunity to bring together the community, the school, and local businesses to show how important it is to invest in our future, our students,” said Mauldin Middle School’s Science Department Chair Gwendolynn Shealy.

According to Shealy, teachers recently returned from Green Power Solar School curriculum training and will be teaching students the importance of recycling and taking care of the environment.

“We are eager to use the curriculum,” she said, “as well as the data provided by our solar panel, to cover our state standards in a hands-on and exciting new way. The curriculum will allow our teachers here at Mauldin Middle to make learning standards relevant to real-world experiences and enjoyable for all the students.”

In 2000, Laurens Electric Cooperative became the first electric utility in the Upstate to generate and offer to its customers Green Power from methane gas collected at landfills. All revenue from the Green Power program is reinvested in future development of renewable resources or facilities, such as the Solar Schools project.

“A great way to give back to our community is by investing in future generations,” said Laurens Electric Cooperative President and CEO David Wasson. “The Solar Schools project does just that.”

Laurens Electric Cooperative serves 50,000 member-owners in Laurens, Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Newberry, Union, and Abbeville counties. Since 1939, the co-op has been dedicated to being the provider of choice for energy and related services in the Upstate.

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For reference, see also www.scgreenpower.com

JPEG image labeled ‘solar panel’ available by request – caption: Laurens Electric Cooperative dedicated Mauldin Middle School’s newly installed solar panel as part of the Green Power Solar Schools project.