



PRESS RELEASE

March 31, 2009

Media Contacts:

Laura G. Varn

843-761-4133

lgvarn@santeecooper.com

Christy Overstreet

843-479-3855 ext. 128

cjoverstreet@marlboro.coop

Bennettsville Middle next Green Power Solar School

Innovative environmental program continues

MARLBORO, S.C.— Marlboro Electric Cooperative, Santee Cooper, Marlboro County School District and The City of Bennettsville gathered today along with children, teachers and parents to dedicate Bennettsville Middle School as a Green Power Solar School.

The Green Power Solar Schools initiative is designed to encourage interest in the environment and demonstrate the feasibility and limitations of renewable power generation. Each Green Power Solar School receives a 2-kilowatt solar power system, which will provide a teaching, research and hands-on demonstration opportunity for students. The project uses a new renewable energy curriculum designed especially for the program that meets state science standards. Each school program is supplemented by an Internet-based monitoring system that provides real-time access to information on the system's performance as well as other solar schools in South Carolina.

"Marlboro Electric Cooperative is pleased to be a partner in this innovative program for our young people. We can't think of a better way to help discover solutions to the energy challenges before us than to work with these young people. We know their educational experience will be enriched through this program," said William L. Fleming, Marlboro Electric Cooperative's President & CEO.

Green Power Solar Schools represents one way that Santee Cooper and the state's 20 electric cooperatives promote renewable energy, and it fulfills Santee Cooper's commitment to reinvest Green Power funds back into renewable resources across South Carolina. In September 2001, Santee Cooper became the first electric utility in the state to generate and offer Green Power to its customers from methane gas collected at the Horry County Solid Waste Authority Landfill near Conway. Since then, two additional landfills in Lee, Richland and Anderson counties have opened, as has the 16-kilowatt solar installation at Coastal Carolina University. Another landfill methane gas generating site has been announced in Georgetown County. Santee Cooper, all 20 electric cooperatives and The City of Georgetown market Green Power to their customers.

Marc Tye, vice president of conservation and renewable resources at Santee Cooper, said, "Renewable energy exploration and conservation are important components that will impact the growing electricity needs in our state. It's critical that we challenge tomorrow's leaders to think about energy sources that will benefit future generations."



City of Bennettsville Administrator Max Alderman said, “We are pleased to be a partner with Marlboro Electric Cooperative, Santee Cooper, and Marlboro County Schools in this alternative energy project. Solar energy is not new, but is now an important part of the many alternative energy sources being developed to reduce this country’s reliance on foreign oil.” He said this great project not only introduces solar energy to the students but provides additional electric power for the school.

Guest speaker O’Neal Hamilton, District 5 Commission and former Chairman of the South Carolina Public Service Commission, called the Green Power Solar School a step forward for Marlboro County. “The students are the voice of the future and are the real heroes here to teach us to be more conservative in how we use energy,” said Hamilton.

Meeting the state’s growing energy needs is a challenge, Hamilton said. “We are basically starting over. We need to do the right thing,” he said. “Sponsors of the Green Power Solar School Project are taking a giant step in the right direction.” He called on students to help find solutions to our state and nation’s energy challenges. “It won’t be long before you’re there to do it,” Hamilton said.

Bennettsville Middle School’s Principal Diane Grant said, “Exposing young people to this solar technology will bring excitement and added learning dimensions to the classroom experience. Both teachers and students will benefit from this partnership.”

Five additional schools, served by Palmetto Electric Cooperative, Berkeley Electric Cooperative, Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, Aiken Electric Cooperative and Laurens Electric Cooperative, became Green Power Solar Schools in 2007. Santee Electric Cooperative, Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative, York Electric Cooperative, Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Lynches River Electric Cooperative, Black river Electric Cooperative, Fairfield Electric Cooperative, Horry Electric Cooperative, Edisto Electric Cooperative, and Coastal Electric Cooperative dedicated their Green Power Solar Schools in 2008.

Santee Cooper Green, is a utility-wide commitment bringing together all the eco-friendly, conservation-minded approaches that Santee Cooper practices and all the programs and opportunities for its customers to “go green.” More information can be found at www.SanteeCooperGreen.com

Marlboro Electric Cooperative is a member-owned, nonprofit electric cooperative serving more than 6,500 accounts in Marlboro and Dillon counties. Visit www.marlborelectric.net for more information.

Santee Cooper is South Carolina’s state-owned electric and water utility, and the state’s largest power producer, supplying electricity to more than 163,000 retail customers in Berkeley, Georgetown, and Horry counties, as well as to 29 large industrial facilities, the cities of Bamberg and Georgetown, and The Charleston Air Force Base. Santee Cooper also generates the power distributed by the state’s 20 electric cooperatives to more than 700,000 customers in all 46 counties. Approximately 2 million South Carolinians receive their power directly or indirectly from Santee Cooper. The utility also provides water to 137,000 consumers in Berkeley and Dorchester counties, and the town of Santee. For more information, visit www.santeecooper.com. For information on how Santee Cooper lives green and how you can go green, visit www.SanteeCooperGreen.com.