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**MMWEC solar program reaches 500 kilowatt milestone, adapts to changing marketplace**

LUDLOW, Mass. – October 6, 2010 – Massachusetts municipal utilities are adding more than 500 kilowatts of solar energy to the state’s power supply through a one-stop solar development program offered by the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC).

In keeping with the program’s goal of simplifying solar energy development for municipal utilities, MMWEC also recently expanded its services to accommodate changes in the state’s incentive program for solar project development. Specifically, MMWEC has received approval from the state Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to serve as an aggregator of solar renewable energy certificates (SRECs) for municipal utilities, which now can sell SRECs through MMWEC to offset solar project costs.

“Reaching the 500-kilowatt milestone is an important achievement and reflects the commitment of municipal utilities to solar energy development,” said Ronald C. DeCurzio, MMWEC Chief Executive Officer. “It’s also important to keep pace with changes in the solar energy marketplace, and expanding the program to include SREC aggregation services makes it even more valuable to municipal utilities,” DeCurzio said.

Another aspect of program services involves the coordinated efforts of MMWEC and municipal utilities in Ashburnham, Holden and Ipswich that led to the receipt of \$382,000 in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants for five solar projects in those towns.

Using all Massachusetts-based products and services, MMWEC’s solar program offers one-stop solar project shopping for municipal utilities, which can purchase solar energy panels, electric current inverters and project installation services through a turnkey contract with MMWEC. Through this program, 14 projects capable of generating 538.8 kilowatts of electricity are in operation or under development in 10 municipal utility communities.

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All but one of the projects range in size from a 2-kilowatt project in Princeton to a 33.6-kilowatt solar photovoltaic array in Ipswich. The program's flagship project is a 1,760-panel, 369.6-kilowatt project under construction in West Boylston that will begin generating electricity later this year. The West Boylston Municipal Lighting Plant and MMWEC created a municipal lighting plant cooperative to develop the West Boylston project, which won a \$1.17 million federal allocation of Clean Renewable Energy Bonds to assist with project financing.

MMWEC created its program in 2008 to complement the state's program for solar energy development, which initially offered direct project rebates. In 2010, the state program changed to incorporate a development incentive based upon the production and sale of SRECs, which are tradable credits tied to the amount of solar energy produced by a project.

While municipal utility-based projects generally were not eligible for the state rebates, they are eligible to participate in the SREC initiative, creating a new incentive and source of revenue for municipal utility projects. However, to qualify for and sell SRECs, projects must meet a series of registration, production verification and other requirements.

In order to help municipal utilities capture the benefits of the SREC initiative, MMWEC now is providing a range of project qualification and registration assistance. It also recently received DOER approval as an SREC aggregator for municipal utilities, which enables MMWEC to aggregate and sell in bulk the SRECs created by projects in municipal utility communities.

"This is the kind of work that MMWEC does as a joint action agency," DeCurzio said. "We are extending MMWEC's joint action services to encompass the requirements of the solar power marketplace, which makes it more efficient and cost-effective for municipal utilities to develop solar resources," he said.

Municipal utilities participating in the MMWEC solar program include those based in the Massachusetts communities of Ashburnham, Holden, Ipswich, Littleton, Middleborough, Princeton, Shrewsbury, Templeton and West Boylston. The Pascoag (RI) Utility District also is a participant.

MMWEC is a non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that provides a variety of power supply, financial, risk management and other services to the state's consumer-owned, municipal utilities.