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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Newton SUNERGY Marks Earth Day With Solar Installation - April 23rd Open House Offered to Interested Consumers

NEWTON, Mass, April 22, 2003 — Supported by funding from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's (MTC) *Solar to Market Initiative*, the city of Newton's "SUNERGY" program, initiated by Mayor David B. Cohen, has begun the installation of the first-of-many solar electric (also known as photovoltaic or PV) systems. The city's involvement is part of a geographic "cluster" organized by the Massachusetts Energy Consumers Alliance (Mass Energy) to facilitate solar installations in Newton, Boston, Brookline, and Somerville. Approximately forty systems will be installed throughout the four communities, with about fifteen slated for Newton.

The first installation in Newton will take place at the home of George and Cynthia Cole and will begin on Tuesday, April 22, which is celebrated nationally as Earth Day. Weather permitting, the project will be completed within 48 hours.

Newton Mayor David B. Cohen is proud to be on the cutting edge of renewable energy. Said Cohen, "It is obvious to me that our current energy situation is unsustainable in so many ways – economically, environmentally, and politically. But I am heartened by the fact that there is a viable alternative and that we in Newton can lead the way."

The Coles' solar electric system should produce about 3,000 kWh per year, which is equal to about 20% of their home's electricity use. "We have had a long-time interest in using alternative sources of energy and reducing dependency upon conventional petrol and electrical energy. The SUNERGY program made it possible for us to become individual contributors toward this goal. We appreciate the collective efforts of Mass Energy and the City of Newton for providing this incentive," said George Cole, homeowner and beneficiary of the grant funds received by Mass Energy from MTC. Because the Coles currently have an electric hot water system, which is the most expensive kind to operate, they are also considering installing a solar hot water system with the assistance of the SUNERGY program and Mass Energy.

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The solar electric system being installed for the Coles would typically cost about \$20,000. However, Mass Energy was able to bring down the cost to \$16,000 by bulk purchasing PV and working with a pre-established design and installation team. These lower costs, combined with a grant of approximately \$8,500 and available tax incentives, mean that participating consumers save more than 50%.

“It will take time, but eventually solar energy will be a significant part of our energy mix. Some communities in this country will lead us toward a solar future and Newton is out in front already,” said Larry Chretien, Mass Energy’s Executive Director.

Cohen noted that the City will install solar panels on about five city buildings this year, including Newton South High School and the library. He said, “The array on Newton South will be one of the largest in the Northeast. While it will provide an impressive amount of clean energy, it will also be a great educational tool. And the array at the library will have an educational kiosk so that we all be able to learn more about the benefits of solar energy.”

“We are thrilled to work with the City of Newton and the Massachusetts Energy Consumers Alliance to install solar panels on homes and businesses in Newton,” said Mitchell Adams, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. “The funding for this project comes from our \$10 million *Solar to Market Initiative*, which will lead to new clean power pulsing through homes like the Coles’.”

Evergreen Solar, the Marlboro, MA-based manufacturer of PV panels, is a key partner in this project. Mark A. Farber, President and CEO of Evergreen Solar, Inc, is a Newton resident. He commented, “We’re proud to be a part of this program to provide systems developed, manufactured and installed by firms based in Massachusetts – giving both economic and environmental benefits to our community. As a Newton resident, I am doubly proud to see my city take on a leadership role.”

The installation team for the Cole home will be lead by Zapotec Energy. Also on the installation team will be Lighthouse Electrical Contracting, Inc. of Pembroke. Lighthouse’s President Herb Aikens said that electricians working for him are members of IBEW Local 103, which has been extremely supportive of solar energy.

Citizens interested in following the lead of George and Cynthia Cole are invited to participate in a Newton SUNERGY-sponsored “Solar Open House” on Wednesday April 23rd. At Newton City Hall’s War Memorial Hall, from 5:00-7:00, representatives from Newton SUNERGY, Mass Energy, and solar installers (Zapotec Energy and Solar Works) will be available to explain incentive programs, show off solar electric and hot water technology, and answer questions. In addition, citizens are invited to hear Steven Strong, President of Solar Design Associates, speak about the future of solar

energy in building integrated photovoltaics. Mr. Strong will be making a presentation at 7:00 pm (Wednesday, April 23rd) at the Newton Free Library.

ABOUT NEWTON SUNERGY

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A partnership of the Mayor's Office, City of Newton Planning & Development Department, City of Newton Public Buildings Department, Newton Public Schools, Green Decade Coalition/Newton, and the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce. It is supported financially by grants from the U.S. Department of Energy's Million Solar Roofs Initiative, and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Renewable Energy Trust.

