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Geronimo Energy Brings Solar Savings to Saint Paul Public Housing with Community Solar Garden Program

Geronimo Energy (“Geronimo”) is teaming up with St. Paul Public Housing (“SPPHA”) to bring solar to their residents under Xcel Energy’s Community Solar Garden Program. Residents of multi-unit housing have not traditionally been able to enjoy the benefits of solar energy. However, with the introduction of the Community Solar Garden Program, the barriers to solar power have been removed for SPPHA residents.

Geronimo Energy’s project was selected from a group of competitive proposals received by SPPHA. The project will help offset roughly 90% of SPPHA’s electricity usage at 16 high-rise buildings, comprised of 2554 housing units, as well as the main office facility in Saint Paul. Over the life of the contract with Geronimo, SPPHA will support the generation of 864,354,001 kWh of solar electricity and save over \$4,000,000 in electricity expenses, while annually offsetting over 25,000 metric tons of CO2 emissions.

“We are excited to help SPPHA harness the benefits of solar energy through Xcel Energy’s game changing community solar garden program” said Geronimo Energy Director of Solar, Nathan Franzen.

Under the Community Solar Garden program, Xcel customers can purchase a subscription to a Community Solar Garden in exchange for a credit on their monthly Xcel bill. The program was approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in early 2014 and is designed to improve access to solar for businesses and homeowners. The Community Solar Garden program utilizes economies of scale to reduce overall construction costs which are then passed on to subscribers through savings on their electricity bills.



About Geronimo Energy

Geronimo Energy is a utility-scale wind and solar energy developer headquartered in Edina, Minnesota. Geronimo has developed three operating wind farms and several solar projects in Minnesota. Geronimo is poised to build six additional wind projects with an aggregate nameplate capacity of over 1,100 megawatts (MW) throughout the Midwest over the next two years and expects to build the 100 MW Aurora Solar Project in Minnesota, as well as other solar facilities nationwide, by 2016. Geronimo has a multi-gigawatt development pipeline of wind and solar projects in various stages of development throughout the United States. Geronimo has a strategic partnership with Enel Green Power North America, furthering its credibility and capital strength to deliver on projects for customers and communities. For more information about Geronimo Energy www.geronimoenergy.com.

About the St. Paul Public Housing Agency

The PHA administers federal rent subsidies that provide safe, affordable housing to more than 21,000 Saint Paul residents. Almost half of those residents live in the 4258 public housing homes and apartments that the PHA owns and manages. Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers pay part of the rent in privately-owned properties for another 4,589 households (families and individuals).

Over half of the PHA-owned units (2,554) are in 16 high-rise apartment buildings for seniors, persons with disabilities and younger single people. Most of the high-rise apartments are efficiency or one-bedroom units. The hi-rises are widely dispersed throughout the city.

Almost 1300 townhomes are in the PHA's four housing developments for families. The largest family development is McDonough Homes in the North End, which has 580 units. Roosevelt Townhomes on the East Side has 320 family units; and Mt. Airy Homes, close to downtown, has 298 family units. The smallest family development is Dunedin Terrace on the West Side, with 88 units. Another 400 families rent PHA "scattered site" homes that are distributed throughout the city.

The PHA also administers the federal rent subsidy program called "Housing Choice Vouchers", previously known as Section 8. The rental vouchers help over 4500 households pay affordable rents in privately-owned apartments and rental homes.

Families in both public housing and Section 8-subsidized apartments pay about 30% of their income for rent and utilities, and the federal housing subsidy pays the rest of the cost.

The total insured value of the PHA's public housing properties is about \$600 million. The total annual budget for public housing, Section 8 and related programs is about \$70 million. Public housing residents pay over \$12 million a year to the PHA for rent and utilities. HUD will



provide about \$11.6 million this year for the public housing “operating subsidy” and another \$6 million for major modernization work. The Section 8 program alone will bring about \$36 million in federal funds to Saint Paul this year, most of which is then paid out as rent subsidies to private property owners. Federal funding for both Section 8 and public housing has been cut significantly by the “sequestration” and other Congressional actions and the prospects for future funding are uncertain.

The St. Paul PHA has a national reputation for successful programs and has been recognized in many ways over its 37-year history.

The agency has earned HUD’s “High Performer” rating for 24 consecutive years in its public housing program, and for 13 consecutive years in its Section 8 program, based on performance indicators like these:

- All of the PHA’s public housing units are fully occupied: less than 1% vacancy rate every year for over 17 years.
- PHA residents pay rent on time. The PHA’s collection losses are under two percent of all rents and charges billed.
- PHA residents comply with their lease. Only 1-2% of residents are evicted for serious lease violations each year.
- The PHA’s public housing units are well maintained. Maintenance requests are completed quickly: Emergencies repairs are done in less than 24 hours, and most routine requests in an average of less than 5 days. Residents report almost 100% satisfaction with work orders.
- Crime rates in PHA properties are consistently lower than city-wide averages.
- The PHA spends its capital grants from HUD on time, following approved plans and budgets.
- The PHA compiled a 15 year record with zero findings on its annual audits and has won awards for its financial reporting.

The PHA received HUD’s National Outstanding Sustained Performance Awards in 1991 and 1996, and was the highest-rated large housing agency in the country in 1996 (the only year HUD published such a national ranking). www.stpha.org