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'Solar Strand' Opens as New Gateway to UB Campus

3,200-Panel Photovoltaic Array Reduces Carbon Footprint, Lowers Energy Costs and Promotes Sustainability Goals

BUFFALO, NY -- In celebration of Earth Day, the University at Buffalo (UB) and the New York Power Authority (NYPA) were joined by New York State and local officials, business organizations, environmental advocates and Western New York companies to mark the energizing of the UB Solar Strand, which will meet the electricity needs of hundreds of student apartments, cut energy costs and reduce the university's carbon footprint.

The energizing of the Solar Strand follows the launching last week by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of his NY-Sun Initiative for bringing together and expanding multiple solar power incentive programs for spurring the growth of the state's solar economy and quadrupling annual development of solar power in New York State by 2013, to make New York State a leader in the clean energy economy.

The 3,200-panel photovoltaic array stands at the main entrance to UB's North Campus and provides a striking but practical campus gateway. The 750-kilowatt Solar Strand will generate enough clean, renewable power to help avoid the emission of nearly 400 tons of harmful greenhouse gases every year. It will serve as a natural classroom for UB students and for kindergarten through high school students.

"The Solar Strand is a powerful demonstration of how creative partnerships between universities, the New York Power Authority and our elected leadership are helping to advance sustainable solutions for our region and state," said UB President Satish K. Tripathi. "As one of the largest ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays in New York State, the Solar Strand is a focal point for sustainable education and research. It's a resource not only for the university, but for the public, who will be able to learn, teach, work and discover in this new space."

"The completion of the Solar Strand underscores the success of our partnership with the University at Buffalo to support sustainability initiatives, as well as the Power Authority's dedication to the advancement of clean energy technology and the priority we place on teaming with local companies on such innovative initiatives to spur the Western New York economy," said Gil C. Quiniones, NYPA president and chief executive officer. "The Power Authority is dedicated to advancing Gov. Cuomo's aggressive and far-reaching NY-Sun Initiative through our funding of innovative solar technology research, training and demonstration projects and cost-reduction strategies to improve solar affordability for residents and businesses and bring to the fore this emerging technology."

Quiniones noted that the energizing of the UB Solar Strand project immediately following the launching of the Governor's NY-Sun Initiative underscores the state's momentum in achieving the exponential growth of solar power. The Solar Strand also represents a cornerstone of NYPA's Renewable Energy Program to help create a pathway to commercialization of emerging renewable energy technologies by providing incentives to promote the demonstration and validation of new technologies. Under the renewable energy program, NYPA provided more than \$7 million in project funding for the Solar Strand as well as engineering and management oversight for the

project's construction and installation.

This project also demonstrates UB's commitment to environmental stewardship under the UB 2020 strategic plan and Building UB: The Comprehensive Physical Plan. This plan guides development of facilities to support the growth of research in the university's strategic strengths and to improve the student experience in classrooms, labs, libraries, dining halls, dormitories and recreational facilities and will make UB campuses great places that people can truly enjoy and appreciate.

In support of the revitalization of the Western New York economy and encouraging the growth of the region and state's clean energy economy, the NYPA Board of Trustees, in approving the project award, signaled that the engagement of local businesses should be a priority. DeCloet Greenhouse Manufacturing, which ultimately won the project award, partnered with such local companies as Solar Liberty of Williamsville, Community Steel Corporation of Buffalo, Ed Strickland Welding and Fabricating of Clarence and Hausrath's Landscaping Maintenance Inc. of Buffalo to complete this project. In the end, nearly 40 New York State -based companies, employing hundreds of local residents, contributed to the successful realization of the visually striking and energy-saving UB Solar Strand.

"It is thrilling to witness the completion and energizing of this solar strand, which demonstrates not only how clean energy initiatives can help reduce energy costs to public institutions, but how these projects can help support and revitalize the local economy," said D. Patrick Curley, a NYPA trustee and resident of Orchard Park. "The Power Authority is proud of its long history of leadership in clean energy technology advancement and will continue to find ways to link these initiatives with Gov. Cuomo's efforts to improve and expand the state economy."

The project's significance, however, is not only in the energy it produces. It will actively engage the community in thinking about sustainability and will promote discussion about the future of green energy in New York State and nationwide.

"Our goal was to deliver the most efficient power-generating system we could, and create an iconic entrance to the campus," said Robert G. Shibley, dean of the UB School of Architecture and Planning and chair of the UB Environmental Stewardship Committee. "We accomplished that and more: the idea that you could scale up something that delivers 750,000 watts of power and have it also be art makes this project unique."

The Solar Strand, designed by Walter Hood, a renowned landscape artist, comprises groups of solar panels extending in three rows for a quarter mile along Flint Road. The linear formation evokes the pattern of a DNA fingerprint, particularly when observed from a bird's-eye view. Walkways that weave between the panels, which will open in August, will give the public a chance to enjoy the site. The array's tallest groupings of solar panels will shelter three outdoor "social rooms" where people can gather.

"Thinking about how we inhabit this place -- Earth -- we have to start thinking about these alternative energies, and how they can actually be part of our lives," Hood said.

Though the Solar Strand is now operational, volunteers and workers still need to complete finishing touches. UB students will provide assistance on May 1, planting more shrubbery, spreading the concrete and raking the site. The beauty of the landscape design will emerge in years to come as trees adorning the area grow taller and fuller, and birds and other wildlife begin to visit.

"Students like the fact that UB is making strides to become a better, more environmentally friendly university," said UB student Shivani Kamodia, who is majoring in human health and environmental sciences. "There is so much going on at UB to make the campus more sustainable."

The installation is part of a green building boom underway at UB. The university is in the midst of opening six new LEED-designed facilities in a two-year span, starting with William R. Greiner Hall in August 2011. (LEED,

short for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the U.S. Green Building Council's certification system.)

The partnership between UB and NYPA on clean energy matters dates back many years. Together, the two institutions have completed seven projects totaling \$43 million since 2004. The most recent projects include chillers, campus submetering and lighting at the South Campus and heating systems and HVAC controls at the Ellicott Complex on the North Campus. These projects will save the university over \$1.3 million in annual energy costs and avoid the emission of nearly 8,000 tons of greenhouse gases.

'SOLAR STRAND' -- STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT

"The Solar Strand -- a new gateway to the North Campus -- is a sustainable, cost-saving project for the University at Buffalo and the entire community. For UB students and school students in the area, it will serve as another classroom to learn and grow. For the community, it will serve as a way to enhance the quality of life for all residents by avoiding 400 tons of harmful greenhouse gases every year. I commend the University at Buffalo, the New York Power Authority and the local companies involved on this project, as well as all of their workers, on a job well done," said New York State Senator Michael H. Ranzenhofer.

"I am excited to participate in the energizing of the 750-kilowatt UB Solar Strand as we continue to harness the sun for our energy needs in New York State. Solar power is a clean, cost-effective alternative that saves money and decreases the carbon footprint. As the chair of the New York State Senate's Environmental Conservation Committee, I will continue to endorse new solar programs that seek to actively engage the community in discussions about emerging renewable energy technologies and the future of green energy in New York State. A project like this benefits the UB students, the community at large and, through construction jobs, the Western New York economy," said New York State Senator Mark Grisanti.

"The Solar Strand is an example of creative ingenuity that can save money and lower the carbon footprint," New York State Assemblyman Dennis H. Gabryszak said. "Finding new avenues for renewable energy is important and I applaud the University at Buffalo and NYPA for their collaboration on this project."

"I'm thrilled to see the University at Buffalo using green energy," said New York State Assemblyman John D. Ceretto. "The use of this clean, efficient domestic energy source shows that the University at Buffalo is on the cutting edge of new energy uses. We need to continue to strive to use cleaner energy, produced in the United States."