

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2013

PRESS RELEASE

SOLAR INSTALLATIONS POWER ELECTRIC VEHICLES AT IIT, CITY OF EVANSTON & UNCOMMON GROUND
Environmentally Sustainable Infrastructure Using Renewable Energy Source Serves As National Model

CHICAGO – As the inaugural transportation innovation project for **Alternative Transportation for Chicagoland (ATC)**, in collaboration with a range of funders and partners, ATC is unveiling the installation of three new solar canopies, with a fourth canopy near completion. In addition to the solar canopies, the solar project includes the installation of solar panels at two building locations and when combined with the solar panels installed on the canopies, will have a capacity of 150 kilowatts (kW). The renewable solar energy generated from the solar panels will be used to charge alternative-fuel, electric vehicles and power facilities at location points in Chicago and the City of Evanston.

“The Chicagoland solar power project serves as a national model for solar power implementation and electric vehicle charging stations, and is one of the largest in the Midwest,” said **Sharon Feigon, CEO, Alternative Transportation of Chicagoland**. “This solar installation showcases what is possible for supporting broader adoption of electrical vehicle use, while providing valuable data on producing and storing clean energy to inform how the region can grow its use of solar energy to build an environmentally sustainable infrastructure.”

Alternative Transportation for Chicagoland, formerly IGO which brought the first carsharing concept to Chicago and whose IGO-brand carsharing assets (but not the solar project) were recently acquired by **Enterprise Holdings**, facilitated the solar canopy and solar panel installations through licensing agreements with the **City of Chicago** and **City of Evanston**. The three new solar canopies are located at the **Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)**, the **City of Evanston** and **Uncommon Ground Restaurant** at 1401 West Devon in Chicago, with construction of a fourth solar canopy underway in the **Village of Oak Park**. These solar canopies will produce a combined total of 70,000 kilowatt hours annually to provide power to electric vehicle charging stations designated for IGO electrical vehicles and for public use.

“Innovations like solar canopies are the key to success as we work to make Illinois the greenest state in the nation,” **Governor Quinn** said. “This public-private collaboration will create jobs and drive Illinois’ clean energy economy forward. I commend the city of Chicago and Alternative Transportation of Chicago for their work on this.”

As part of the complete solar project, solar panels will be installed on two **IIT buildings** and one **Easter Seals program location** building, for a total capacity of 80 kW

“Solar powered vehicle charging stations are a significant step toward sustainable infrastructure throughout Chicago and will help us shift to renewable clean energy sources,” said **Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel**. “As a developing new industry, these stations will create job opportunities and boost local economic growth throughout the city’s neighborhoods.”

The power generated from the solar panels on the canopies and the solar panels installed at the IIT and Easter Seals buildings will have a 150kW capacity for a total of 150,000 kilowatt hours of power annually to charge the electric vehicle charging stations owned by ATC, help power the **Center for Neighborhood Technology** building (the parent organization for ATC), and provide power to IIT buildings and the **Easter Seals Autism Therapeutic School After School Programs** building.

“With our grassroots legacy, sense of community and leadership role in serving as a sustainable transportation provider, this initiative will provide even more options for our IGO members,” said **Ryan Johnson, assistant vice president, Enterprise CarShare**. “Enterprise frequently works with local and national organizations to help broaden the discussion about local mobility and transportation, and we look forward to continuing this effort in Chicago.”

The solar installation project was supported by approximately \$1.5 million in total grants. Funding for the solar canopies was provided by **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**, **Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation**, and **U.S. Department of Energy**. **City of Chicago Department of Transportation**, **Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition**, and **U.S. Department of Energy** provided funding support for the charging stations and electric vehicles. Project support was provided by **ComEd** and **Gas Technical Institute**.

“This ground-breaking solar project is a critical turning point for the Chicago region, and an example for other cities, in creating sustainable and renewable clean energy to work toward energy independence,” said **Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois)**. “Our commitment to environmental progress is crucial to protecting the health and quality of life of future generations and also has a direct impact on our ability to compete in the 21st century economy.”

COLLABORATION PAVES WAY FOR COMPLETION OF SOLAR INSTALLATION

While there were early challenges in the solar project due to financial issues with lead contractor, San Diego-based 350 Green LLC, the solar project was able to move forward and reach completion through wide-ranging collaboration between many committed public and private partners, including:

- **Property owners at Uncommon Ground restaurant, Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Easter Seals, City of Chicago, City of Evanston, Village of Oak Park**
- **Funding from Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, City of Chicago Department of Transportation, Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition, U.S. Department of Energy**
- **Support from Mayor Emanuel, Governor Quinn, Representative Schakowsky, Illinois Electric Vehicle Advisory Council**
- **Technical management and participation from ComEd; Gas Technical Institute; project contractor Continental; architect Jonathan Boyer, principal at Farr Associates Architecture and Design; project manager, Doug Snower, Windfree; battery manufacturer, Said Al Halaj, All Cell.**

“The addition of the solar canopy, the electric vehicle charging stations, and battery storage at the City of Evanston’s Main Public Library parking lot directly reflects our commitment to developing policies and implementing initiatives in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and transportation that we believe have a direct impact on the environmental and economic sustainability of Evanston,” said **Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl**. “It is through forward-thinking initiatives like this solar project that we will succeed in our vision of sustainability for our community.”

The partners in the solar project expect the addition of the solar canopies to increase awareness of and showcase electrical vehicles as viable mobility options that can be supported through renewable, clean energy sources.

“Uncommon Ground has been recognized as the ‘Country’s Greenest Restaurant,’ and hosting one of the solar canopies at the restaurant is a natural extension of our commitment to environmentally sustainable practices, while also providing the opportunity for us to encourage and support our customers and neighbors in their transportation choices that further reduce our carbon footprint,” said **Michael Cameron, founder of Uncommon Ground**.

At IIT, solar panels will produce 60,000 kilowatt hours of power annually. In addition to providing electric vehicle power and powering facilities at two of IIT’s buildings in Chicago, will be used to showcase IIT’s interface with the Smart Grid being implemented by ComEd, seeking ways to minimize demand on the grid and integrate the use of renewable energy sources.

“The solar canopies and panels represent more than a source of renewable energy for electric vehicles. Through sophisticated tracking and analysis of solar power production and usage, we will capture valuable data that can inform our understanding of clean energy along with other elements, such as water and transportation, to create environmentally sustainable communities,” said **Professor Mohammad Shahidepour, director, Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation, Illinois Institute of Technology**.

Battery storage also is being installed at the solar canopy in Evanston to store excess power and provide an additional source for monitoring and studying solar power production and usage rates, potentially yielding critical insights for utilizing the clean, renewable energy source to develop a sustainable infrastructure.

“These solar canopies with their integrated batteries provide living alternative energy labs to study new ways of using energy storage to fully optimize integration of renewable resources such as solar energy with the grid,” said **Michael McMahan, vice president of Smart Grid, ComEd**.

BUILDING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTES TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

The commitment to sustainability across the region and the state has far-reaching impact beyond ensuring the environmental future of our communities, region and planet. The demand for electric vehicles is expected to increase based on heightened awareness of the commitment and progress toward building an infrastructure which supports electrical vehicles. This demand will encourage accelerated production of electric vehicles and the supply chain related to the electric vehicle industry, thereby supporting job growth.

The solar installation project already has experienced direct regional economic impact through job creation in areas such as sustainable transportation, as well as skilled labor and manufacturing. The solar project will employ solar panel installation trainees from the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local 134 (IBEW 134)** to install the solar panels at the Easter Seals building. Local manufacturer **All Cell** supplied the battery storage and local manufacturers fabricated the steel beams used in the solar canopies.

“CNT has always seen cities as a solution to economic and environmental challenges, and these solar canopies are a tangible example,” said **Kathryn Tholin, CEO of the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)**. “The best cities are those that can make productive use of underutilized assets, ones that build infrastructure systems that use resources more efficiently, ones that

promote high-quality, low_carbon lifestyles and broad-based economic success for all residents. This project, harnessing the renewable power of the sun, brings Chicago closer to this vision.”

Alternative Transportation for Chicagoland is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the sustainable mobility needs of communities throughout the Chicago region, making it possible for people to live well without having to own a car.

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