



Sunset Hills Vineyard: Turning Sunshine into Wine with the Largest Solar Energy System in Loudoun County, VA

For Immediate Release:

Purcellville, VA, November 4, 2010 – Just an hour outside Washington, DC, noise and congestion give way to rolling hills, horse farms and grape vines. It is here in Virginia, and at Sunset Hills Vineyard in particular, that green scenery and green technology make the perfect pair. Sunset Hills Vineyard is in the process of installing 154 solar panels on the south-facing roofs of their case storage and tasting room barns that will supply all of the winery's electrical needs. With a 35 kilowatt rating, this solar installation is the largest on record for Loudoun County.



Prior to opening Sunset Hills Vineyard to the public, winery owner Mike Canney was a physicist and CEO of an Inc 500 technology firm. After selling Intelligence Data Systems to L3 Communications in 2005, Mike and his wife Diane were ready for a new challenge, and expanded their existing vineyard, purchased a neighbors farm, and set about renovating the 140 year old buildings. Throughout the renovation, and in subsequent projects since, they have identified opportunities for sustainability and responsible environmental stewardship. Solar energy was an obvious choice.

"Turning sunshine into wine is something we've been doing for a while here at Sunset Hills," said Canney. "Converting the winery over to solar power is the next step in continuing to utilize the natural resources we all have available to us. We are proud to make great wine and protect the environment at the same time."



Sunset Hills Vineyard's solar system will produce 50,000 kilowatt hours of electricity each year. That number does not mean much to a lot of people, so put it in perspective, Canney offered the following explanation.

"Over the system life, our solar panels will offset as much CO₂ emissions that a small car produces driving *20.4 million miles*," Canney said. "It's also the equivalent of us planting approximately 160,600 trees."

Completion of the solar panel installation is set for the coming weeks, should be fully operational by the mid November. This solar installation is also coming on the heels of Sunset Hills Vineyard's recent acceptance into Virginia Green, a "statewide program that works to reduce the environmental impacts of Virginia's Tourism Industry" (deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen/).

"All farmers and vintners rely on the weather and the sun in particular for the quality of their crops," Canney remarked. "It makes sense to me to take it one step farther and to power our winery operations via the sun, as well."

Sunset Hills Vineyard is located in Purcellville VA and produces award-winning wines from its 1870s tasting room barn. Sunset Hills Vineyard's dedication to sustainable agriculture and responsible environmental stewardship, and their obsession with quality produces some of the finest wines Virginia has to offer, including international award winners.

For more information about this story and Sunset Hills, Contact: Mike or Diane Canney, 540-882-4560 or visit our website at www.sunsethillsvineyard.com.

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