



**For immediate release**

## **Town billed as 'Heart of the Billion Dollar Coalfield' Welcomes Region's Largest Renewable Energy Project**

**WILLIAMSON, W.Va., Feb. 3, 2011** -- A crew of electricians and construction workers, several with experience in the coal mines, worked this week to install 46 high-performance [SolarWorld](#) solar panels on the roof of the Williamson Family Care Center, ushering renewable energy into a town long known as the "Heart of the Billion Dollar Coalfield."

Christened in a ceremony today, the 11-kilowatt installation on the roof of the clinic building owned by Dr. Dino Beckett highlighted Williamson's "Solar Week." The four-day event convened Mayor Darrin McCormick, representatives from the region's community and technical colleges, electricians, contractors, business owners and residents for on-the-job trainings, energy audits, solar site assessments and related workshops, including one by Appalachian Institute for Renewable Energy.

The week of installation and activities was staged by [Mountain View Solar & Wind](#), a renewable-energy installation firm based in Berkeley Springs, W.Va., and [The Jobs Project](#), a nonprofit promoting sustainable energy markets in Central Appalachia. In the collaboration, The Jobs Project is striving to offer more options to blue-collar workers in hard-pressed mountain communities such as Williamson, a town of about 3,000 on the Kentucky border that is concerned about its declining population.

The time to generate economic activity from renewable energy has never been better, and West Virginia is offering increasingly attractive financial incentives for solar systems, said Eric Mathis, chief executive officer of The Jobs Project. "It just makes sense," Mathis said. "By taking advantage of all of the incentives out there, combined with the energy savings, we expect that Dr. Beckett will make a profit from his solar array in year one. And those panels will produce energy for decades."

Mathis added, "Projects like this won't negatively affect mining jobs one bit. West Virginia has long been an energy state. We need to make sure we stay the nation's leader in all forms of energy."

Mountain View Co-president Mike McKechnie underscored the importance of hiring and training workers in communities where solar systems are installed. "As the industry continues to grow, we're going to train more people. Mingo County is full of skilled electricians who used to work in the mines. I'm glad we can use those skills while paying Americans good wages locally -- up to \$45 an hour for skilled electricians."

Likewise, the solar panels were made by American employees of SolarWorld, the largest and most experienced U.S. manufacturer of crystalline silicon solar technology. "We've been making solar panels in the United States for 35 years now, and we're gratified to see West Virginia tap another domestic source of energy," said Kevin Kilkelly, president of SolarWorld Americas. "SolarWorld believes the advent of solar energy can bring a complementary source of jobs, business and savings long into the future for such far-seeing states."

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## **About SolarWorld:**

The SolarWorld AG Group (ISIN: DE0005108401) is a worldwide leader in offering brand-name, high quality, crystalline solar-power technology. Its strength is its fully integrated solar production. From silicon as the raw material through wafers, cells and modules all the way to turn-key solar systems of all sizes, the group combines all stages of the solar value chain. The central business activity is selling quality modules into the installation and distribution trades and crystalline wafers to the international solar cell industry. Group headquarters are located in Bonn, Germany. The group's largest production facilities operate in Freiberg, Germany, and Hillsboro in the U.S. state of Oregon. Sustainability is the basis of the group strategy. Under the name Solar2World, the group supports care projects using off-grid solar-power solutions in developing countries, exemplifying sustainable economic development. Worldwide, SolarWorld employs about 3,300 people. SolarWorld AG has been quoted on the stock exchange since 1999 and today is listed on, among others, the TecDAX, Ä–koDAX, Dow Jones STOXX 600 as well as in the sustainability index NAI.

## **About The Jobs Project:**

The Jobs Project is a nonprofit organization that fosters sustainable and scalable projects in wind, solar and bio-power throughout the communities of Central Appalachia. The organization emphasizes regional collaboration among educational and financial institutions, community and government organizations and renewable-energy businesses. Based in Williamson, W.Va., the agency is directed by a nine-member board that strives to provide technical leadership and market-based approaches in sustainable enterprises.

## **About Mountain View Solar & Wind:**

Mountain View Solar & Wind installs solar photovoltaic systems, solar hot water systems and wind power with a pride and passion that has earned high praise from communities in West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Recognized as a leader in renewable energy, the company installed about 50 projects totaling 250 kilowatts-peak worth of solar systems in 2010. Mountain View has received the West Virginia Environmental Council's Green Entrepreneur Award.