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Lexington City Schools To Install Solar On Local Middle School

In Partnership With The Solar Schools Initiative Launched by Secure Futures, LLC

LEXINGTON, Va. (July 9, 2015) – Lexington City Public Schools (LCPS) and the Staunton, Va.-based solar energy development firm Secure Futures, LLC have announced a formal agreement to install a 91.5 kilowatt (kW) solar photovoltaic array on the Lylburn Downing Middle School (LDMS) in Lexington, Virginia. The project will be the first of its kind for a public school in the Shenandoah Valley and is part of Secure Futures' Solar Schools Initiative.

The array will enable the school division to generate over 25% of their annual electricity requirements using solar electricity, or enough electricity to power over 10 U.S. homes annually. The schools' solar panels will offset the emissions of more than 81 tons of carbon dioxide per year – the equivalent to offsetting the emissions from approximately 9,000 gallons of gasoline.

“We are excited to have this partnership with Secure Futures,” says Lexington City Schools Superintendent Scott Jefferies. “It shows that you don’t have to be a large school system to make an impact in your community and on your environment. We all have the ability to make a positive impact, and we are proud to do our part.”

Secure Futures will install, maintain and own the solar array at LDMS under a “Power Purchase Agreement,” or PPA, that it has agreed to with LCPS. Under the terms of the agreement, Secure Futures will sell the electricity generated by the array to LCPS at a set rate over a 20-year period.

Because Secure Futures will own and maintain the photovoltaic arrays, they will be installed at no cost to LCPS. In addition to the significant environmental benefits of the project, it is projected to save the division an estimated \$3,800 a year on electrical costs over the life of the agreement.

PPAs are financial instruments that have been critical for solar energy development in Virginia and beyond. These allow schools and other nonprofit institutions to capture the significant tax incentives available to for-profit companies for solar energy development.

In May 2015, Secure Futures launched its Solar Schools Initiative with the announcement of a 1 Megawatt solar photovoltaic array on six schools with the Albemarle County Public School (ACPS) District. The Solar Schools Initiative combines the economic, environmental and educational components of solar energy, incorporating students throughout the process to build Student Powered Solar. The

Lexington City School District will join ACPS as the first schools to go solar under the Solar Schools Initiative.

“Lexington is a traditional small, historic community,” said City Mayor Mimi Elrod. “This new initiative by our schools represents the larger strength of our community to commit to our students’ education, their environment, and the preservation of our surrounding history. I am proud of our school district for taking this important step.”

Installation is scheduled to begin this fall and will highlight educational opportunities for students. The agreement includes a public monitoring system that will be located in the school’s entranceway, and include a ground-mount panel for student’s to perform research and learn more about solar energy.

“The Solar Schools Initiative is an effort to expand renewable energy development and education throughout the Commonwealth,” said Anthony Smith, president and CEO of Secure Futures. “In 2014, solar created jobs at a rate 20% faster than the overall economy – equipping our next generation with these tools will provide them an opportunity to solve the problems of tomorrow.”

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Founded in 2004, Secure Futures is a regional leader in the solar energy industry. It has previously designed and installed solar arrays for several universities in Virginia, including Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg and Washington and Lee University in Lexington. In May 2015, Secure Futures announced its Solar Schools Initiative – a focus on k-12 public schools throughout Virginia, and a commitment to incorporate renewable energy education into each project.