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Net Zero Energy Home to be Built in 5 Days by Habitat for Humanity

Scottsdale, AZ, November 9, 2009 – The new Varela family home will be the center of a lot of attention this week; the entire home will be built in 5 days. By the end of the week, thanks to Habitat for Humanity, an army of volunteers and the generosity of many donors—the Varela family will have an affordable, safe home of their very own.

The “net zero energy” home was designed using energy efficient building practices and includes a renewable energy system to produce as much energy as the homeowners will use on a net annual basis. The home will have the distinction of being powered by solar panels.

The solar electric system has been donated by American Solar Electric to Habitat for Humanity as part of the company’s 2009 Community Outreach Program. The 5.2 kilowatt solar electric system is comprised of BP Solar’s 175-watt Integra photovoltaic (PV) modules and a high-efficiency Fronius IG+ 5.0 inverter. The system is forecasted to generate 9,363 kilowatt-hours of electricity in the first year of operation. Electricity generated by the solar electric system will be used to offset utility power, thereby reducing the cost of electricity for the new homeowner.

The Varela Home will be featured as part of the Greenbuild International Conference and Expo coming to Phoenix on November 11-13. It is the goal of Habitat for Humanity to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification for this “net zero energy” home.

“Owning my own home has been my dream for a very long time,” said Maria Varela, future Habitat homeowner. “I am grateful and proud to finally be able to provide a safe and stable home for my children.”

American Solar Electric, through its 2009 Community Outreach Program, will donate a total of five solar electric systems to families participating in Habitat for Humanity’s new homeowner program.

“American Solar Electric is truly honored to participate in such an exemplary project. Solar electric systems represent one of the greatest contributions a builder can make to a sustainable design and we are proud to support Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona in their effort to bring sustainable design to affordable housing,” said Sean Seitz, president of American Solar Electric.

As part of the industry coordinated donation of the solar electric system for the Varela family, BP Solar and Fronius have agreed to supply the solar panels and an inverter for the project at discounted prices.

“BP Solar is proud to support American Solar Electric and Habitat for Humanity in their efforts to provide not only affordable housing, but also affordable living, by including technologies such as solar power to produce clean, renewable energy for families,” said Jeff Doherty, general manager of distributed sales for BP Solar.

“This project shows that LEED for Homes Rating System is successfully being used for low income housing and can be duplicated affordably by other organizations as well,” said Roger Schwierjohn, President and CEO, Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona. “With the help and support of American Solar Electric, Habitat is bringing green building to the everyday person.”

American Solar Electric, Inc. is an Arizona-based design-build firm specializing in photovoltaic (solar electric) power systems for commercial, industrial, and residential applications. Headquartered in Scottsdale, the company is responsible for the installation of more than 10 million watts of photovoltaic power in Arizona, statewide. American Solar Electric’s approach

includes system design, permitting, procurement, installation, interconnection, and commissioning. Additional information on the company's products and services is available on-line at www.americanpv.com.

About Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona has been serving Central Arizona since 1985. Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona (HFHCAZ) is a grassroots Christian housing organization dedicated to eliminating poverty housing by building affordable housing. Habitat helps families of low and moderate incomes become homeowners. HFHCAZ also builds community partnerships that promote spiritual values and individual responsibility. Since its inception in 1985, the Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona affiliate is one of the most active of the Habitat affiliates and is responsible for the building of more than 703 new homes. Currently the affiliate is active in Apache Junction, Avondale, Chandler, Gilbert, Glendale, Mesa, Peoria, Phoenix and Surprise. Habitat for Humanity International, based in Americus, Georgia, is an ecumenical Christian ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty housing. Habitat International will be soon be dedicating its 300,000th house and has over one million people living in Habitat homes they helped build and are buying through no-profit, zero-interest mortgages. Visit our website, www.habitataz.org.

BP Solar, part of BP Alternative Energy, is a global company with about 2,200 employees. BP Solar designs, manufactures and markets products which use the sun's energy to generate electricity for use in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors. With over 35 years of experience and installations in most countries, BP Solar is one of the world's leading solar companies having manufacturing plants in: Xi'an, China; Bangalore, India; and Frederick, MD, USA. BP Solar invests more than \$10M annually in photovoltaic research and development. Additional information may be found at www.bpsolar.com.

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