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All Points North Foundation Awards Solar Grant to Macon Habitat and Mercer University

May 26, 2020 (MACON, GA) – Macon Area Habitat for Humanity and Mercer University has received a \$60,000 grant from [All Points North Foundation](#) to fund the installation of low-cost solar panel systems on Habitat homes. A decades-long partnership between Macon Area Habitat for Humanity and Mercer University now aims to increase homeownership affordability through low-cost solar deployment in an area where such deployment is historically low. A team of talented Mercer University engineering students with a passion to make change in the world are working to optimize Habitat’s highly efficient homes and design solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in a way that they can be installed by local trained technicians – drastically reducing the cost of the overall PV system while lowering each homeowner’s electricity bill.

“All Points North Foundation continues to explore opportunities to support nonprofits to significantly advance the penetration of PV solar through education, job training, and deployment of solar PV technologies,” said All Points North Foundation Executive Director Laura Staich. “Although the cost of solar has dropped dramatically over the last decade, the upfront cost of going solar still remains a hurdle for most families. We are delighted to support the Habitat – Mercer University partnership in bringing household PV systems to the community.”

Through All Points North Foundation support, the Habitat - Mercer University partnership will provide five highly energy-efficient Habitat homes with grid-tied rooftop solar PV systems at no cost. The individual systems will offset approximately 80-100% of each home’s annual energy needs, saving an estimated 6,400 kilowatt hours of fossil fuel-sourced electricity, resulting in nearly \$1,000 in savings per year for each homeowner. Even more unique is that the partnership will be led by Mercer University students with support from faculty, and a consultant accredited by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners, to assist in the PV system’s design and installation, and in training of both local technicians and Habitat construction staff.

“We are thrilled to be able to continue our partnership with Mercer University and offer the option of solar power to our Habitat homeowners,” said Ivey Hall, Executive Director of Macon Area Habitat for Humanity. “This would not be possible without the generosity of All Points North Foundation and its determination to see access to affordable solar power offered to all households.”

“Mercer’s work with low-cost household solar PV systems has developed at the pilot stage through student-led activities over the past several years, with support from the University’s Research That Reaches Out program,” said Dr. Michael MacCarthy, Assistant Professor of Environmental & Civil Engineering and Director of Mercer’s Engineering for Development Program. “We are excited to grow our service and research work with Habitat for Humanity through All Points North Foundation funding. We believe that in addition to providing clean-energy systems for Habitat homeowners, this project will expose numerous students to Habitat construction and solar PV design and installation, help promote solar PV options to the wider Macon community, and play a significant role in developing a local ‘Macon Made’ market for cost-effective residential solar PV system installations.”

Construction will begin this summer and continue over the next year. For more information about this project please contact Ivey Hall, Macon Area Habitat for Humanity Executive Director, at 478-745-0630 or ihall@maconhabitat.org or Dr. Michael MacCarthy, Mercer University Director of Engineering for Development Program, at 478-301-5480 or maccarthy_m@mercer.edu.

About All Points North Foundation

All Points North Foundation is one of the first and relatively few foundations in the U.S. to focus specifically on significantly advancing the penetration of photovoltaic (PV) solar through education, job training and the deployment of solar PV technologies. Within its solar focus, the foundation has two focal areas: provide solar and workforce development training for tribal communities to expand and diversify the solar job pipeline, and work with small- to medium-sized science centers to engage students, families, and local communities on the benefits and science behind solar. All Points North Foundation does consider funding solar projects outside of these focal areas, but the programs must demonstrate how solar will have a broader impact on local communities (e.g., economic, social or environmental), as well as showcase the potential for replication across the nation. www.AllPointsNorthFoundation.org

About Macon Area Habitat for Humanity

Macon Area Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical Christian housing ministry whose goal is the elimination of substandard housing in Macon. Since its inception in 1986, Macon Area Habitat for Humanity has served over 120 families in the Macon area through invaluable partnerships with area churches, corporations, groups, individuals, non-profits and local government, through the provision of safe, decent and affordable homeownership. MAHFH also works in partnership with residents to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods undergoing revitalization and is a persistent advocate, not only for these initiatives, but also for the removal of blight and decay in Macon-Bibb. To learn more, visit maconhabitat.org.

About Mercer University School of Engineering

Mercer University's School of Engineering, founded in 1985, offers innovative and academically challenging programs that provide students with a comprehensive education, featuring a solid foundation in mathematics and sciences, a core engineering curriculum, a range of courses in engineering specialties and a strong emphasis on communication technologies. The School is consistently ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as one of the top three master's-degree-level engineering schools in the Southeast. Known for its breadth of instruction in its undergraduate program and its five-year joint bachelor's and master's degree program, the School combines technical education with hands-on laboratory experience. Mercer engineers can look forward to joining fellow alumni in companies such as Robins Air Force Base, Mercer Engineering Research Center, Northrop Grumman, Georgia Power, Manhattan Associates and Gulfstream Aerospace.

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