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Lighthouse Electrical Contracting nears completion of 220kW agricultural solar installation

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Lighthouse Electrical Contracting, Inc., the Rockland, Mass. based NECA Boston Chapter member, is on schedule with the design/build 220kW ground-mount photovoltaic (PV) system at Carlson Orchards. The project is one of the largest solar installations at an agricultural site or farm (more than 3 times larger than 65kW system at Four Star Farms in Northfield).

Lighthouse project manager Newell Thomas and president Herb Aikens have supervised a field crew ranging from 8 to 10 IBEW electricians during the 3-month project. The system is comprised of 1,050 Evergreen 210W solar panels, a DPW Solar Corp. ground-mount mounting system at 30 degrees pitch, and solar inverters and data acquisition by Solectria Renewables. Evergreen Solar and Solectria Renewables are both Massachusetts-based companies. DPW Solar Corp. is based in Albuquerque, N.M.

The solar project is being funded in large part by grants from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC)/Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (CEC). It is among the first solar projects in the state to incorporate virtual netmetering and an MTC/CEC grant.

Lighthouse will complete the project this month. The PV system is expected to generate approximately 70-80% of the annual energy usage of the orchard, largely for the operation of refrigeration units used to chill and preserve harvested apples.

A special "ribbon-cutting" celebrating the Carlson Orchard's solar system's interconnection to the power grid is scheduled for Friday, August 13 at 2 pm. The event will kick off the orchard's annual Peach Festival, which will be held August 14 and 15.

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