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Connecticut's first solar resource center opens

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Connecticut's first solar resource center, the Northeast Region Green Distribution and Manufacturing Center, officially opened at 170 Freight St., with a ribbon cutting press conference. Located in the city's Enterprise Zone at the interchange of Routes I-84 & 8, the newly-opened center was created in conjunction with the building's owner, M.R.T. Realty, and Energy System Sales and Training, LLC (www.EnergySystemsllc.com). Both entities were created through IMTI, The Industrial Management & Training Institute at 233 Mill St. in Waterbury (www.IMTI.edu) founded by Marcel Veronneau, co-owner of the 170 Freight St. complex of offices, manufacturing facilities, and warehouses.

"One of the goals of the new Northeast Region Green Distribution and Manufacturing Center," Veronneau said, "is to enhance ESST's ambition of bringing clean manufacturing and solar incentives to Waterbury. ESST was established to distribute solar products throughout Connecticut and New England, and was created for green building contractors and homeowners.

Due to its Waterbury location, and its' solar heating and cooling system, the Northeast Region Green Distribution and Manufacturing Center has the advantage of keeping utility costs low for its' tenants by seeking financial incentives from the City of Waterbury and the State of Connecticut. Through the Connecticut's C-PACE - Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy's innovative financing program, the center's tenants will receive cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy.

The C-PACE program allows M.R.T. Realty as commercial property owners to finance qualifying energy efficiency and clean energy improvements to 170 Freight St. through an additional assessment on our property tax bill."

Connecticut Senator Joan Hartley spoke at the press event 'publicly tipping her hat' to Marcel Veronneau as a "constant innovator in the manufacturing arena." She said, "In Waterbury, we want to lead the path for 21st century manufacturing across the state and Marcel is doing that with this new center and its solar emphasis. Marcel's leadership will help all of us move forward in a very dynamic way. It is obvious by the number of city and state representative here today, including the Office of the Mayor and the Waterbury Development Corp., that this is a collaborative ambition. We have some great energy and talent here, and Marcel is a great leader moving us all forward in a great way."

Waterbury Development Corporation's new CEO, Kevin DelGobbo, commented, "For the last 15 years, I have put a lot of work into the energy sector focused on green energy policy making. It has been many years of piecing it all together, and Connecticut has policies in place today for green energy alternatives. There is a common thread in it all, innovation. This new Center represents an innovative coalition of ambition to attract green-oriented businesses to this site."

With solar power and services the focus of the newly-opened Northeast Region Green Distribution

and Manufacturing Center, the 39,000 s/f building is currently home base for 14 tenants. Veeco Electric, Inc., a Connecticut certified solar design and installation company; Solar Inc., a solar integration company; and Energy Systems Sales and Training, LLC are among the current tenants. This summer a new tenant is anticipated, a New York City-based export and import company that will be available to assist the Center's tenants with the import and export of Connecticut based manufacturing products.

"This building," said Veronneau, "has many advantages for manufacturers, especially 'green' focused companies." To attract more 'green' companies, M.R.T. Realty will launch a three-phase renovation and marketing campaign for the Center. "During Phase 1," stated Veronneau, "the roof, for the first time in 100 years, will be upgraded, and a 300,000 watt solar system will be installed to lower the center's utility costs. The roof has been patched many times and in many ways, but it needs to be completely replaced and this will take place within the next eight months."

It is anticipated that during Phase II, which is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2014, an additional 10 manufacturing tenants will be welcomed to the Center. Veronneau explained, "All the utilities in the 100-year-old building will have been upgraded by that time for 'green' energy efficiency and significant operational cost savings."

Job opportunities in the rapidly-growing and expanding 'green industry' will be a big focus of both Phase II and Phase III of the opening of the Northeast Region Green Distribution and Manufacturing Center "Adding more jobs in the green sector, " explained Veronneau, "is a primary ambition of creating this Center. These jobs can come from green and solar products and services that are currently, and in the future, being produced and offered by tenants in the center today, and by future center tenants including manufacturers and other commercial entities."

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