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Florida House debuts first solar powered air conditioning system

Already known for innovation in energy conservation and sustainability, Sarasota County government is partnering with a local HVAC contractor to use the energy of the sun to cool the Florida House.

Representatives from Tri County Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. will join Sarasota County Commissioners at 10 a.m., Wednesday, July 7, at the Florida House, 4454 Beneva Road, Sarasota to announce plans to install a state-of-the-art Lennox solar powered air conditioning system that will be the first of its kind in Florida.

Air conditioning accounts for 56 percent of an average household's electricity consumption. The new system could decrease electric bills as much as 50 percent. An additional benefit of the system is that when the unit is not operating and the sun is shining, it will produce energy for additional household demands.

Tri County Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. has been in business for over 33 years and is one of the largest HVAC installers and service providers in the state of Florida. "When we learned in December of 2009 that Lennox was developing an air conditioning system that runs on solar power, we thought the Florida House would be the perfect place to introduce it to the public," said Bill Swanson, President of Tri County Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc.

Lennox has just begun production of the new unit and, according to John McCarthy, head of Sarasota County Parks and Recreation the timing could not be better, "We're celebrating our independence as a country on July 4th and now we're announcing the next step to our 'energy' independence thanks to technology and local business partners like Tri County. Sarasota County government considers it an honor and a privilege to showcase yet another watershed event in the effort to become a more sustainable community."

Tri County Air Conditioning & Heating, Inc. will also install indoor air quality products and a separate photovoltaic system that will provide most of the energy needed to operate the rest of the house. The total retail value of the donation of all material and labor to

install the products is approximately \$65,000. It is the single largest donation to the Florida House renovation project by any local business.

Photovoltaics, new air conditioning, and indoor air quality products are just a few of the new additions to the Florida House, which plans to re-open in the fall. "We're very excited about the cooperation we've received updating the Florida House," says Nan Summers, executive director of The Florida House. "It has been a community project and we're looking forward to sharing the results of the efforts of our partners with the public."

The Florida House is a demonstration home and landscape featuring readily available environmentally friendly materials and methods for new and existing Florida homes and yards. The Florida House is a public/private partnership featuring Sarasota County Government, The University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension, The Florida House Foundation of Sarasota, Inc., and Sarasota County School District.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 or visit www.scgov.net

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