



Mitsubishi Electric photovoltaics light up Butte College

Chico Electric installs 2,400 high-efficiency panels on campus hillside

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 – CYPRESS, Calif. – With national attention being focused on renewable energy policies, Butte College proved its leadership in the use of solar power by unveiling its newest set of solar panels at its Oroville campus on Feb 18.

The 2,400 185-watt Mitsubishi Electric solar modules make an impressive statement on a sloping hillside near the tennis courts, absorbing sunlight into the solar cells and converting it into electricity. This recent addition of three solar arrays totaling 450 kW DC will produce an estimated 675,000 kWh of solar electricity annually.

The project will save the college money over time, save on emissions and encourage students interested in renewable energy careers. By taking advantage of the California Solar Initiative rebate, Butte College was able to save nearly \$700,000 of the total project cost.

Other solar projects on the campus include panels at the water treatment plant and a roof-mounted solar array on top of the facilities building. Together, the projects will power 10 buildings and save the college an estimated \$40,000 a year in energy costs.

The college plans to complete the final portion of the solar projects this spring, with more panels near the Physical Sciences building and the Child Development Center. Once the additional solar panels are installed, about half the electrical needs of the college will be provided by solar.

“We commend Butte College for moving forward with their goals of becoming carbon-neutral by 2015 and are impressed with the college’s timely plans to incorporate solar energy into its curriculum,” says Gina Heng, director of sales and marketing for Mitsubishi Electric’s Photovoltaic Division.

The solar electric system was designed and built by Chico Electric, an electrical company with more than 49 years of experience. Chico Electric helped the school meet its goals for this project by donating a portion of the materials near the sewer treatment facility for educational use by students. Classes will assemble and disassemble the panels as training for future jobs in energy technology. The college will also have an educational kiosk on campus where students can see the real-time performance of the solar system and touch an interactive monitor that teaches them how solar works.

Norm Nielsen, president of Chico Electric, said the industry is currently lacking people who are trained for positions that will be developing as interest in new energy sources grows.

The campus is already ratcheting up its “green classes” including launching a certificate in sustainability studies, and offering green building courses and workshops on the weekends. The solar panels will be used this semester to show students solar technology at work, just as the green buildings on campus are toured as part of the curriculum.

Josh Pierce, associate faculty member, explained that state and federal government energy policies are changing, and many studies are being conducted to find out where future jobs will be available. A solar tech program, for example, may be needed at campuses in the future.

About Mitsubishi Electric & Electronics USA’s Photovoltaic Division

Mitsubishi Electric is one of the world’s largest manufacturers and providers of solar power technology. The company’s eco-friendly photovoltaic systems are used throughout the world to bring clean, reliable energy to residences, business, power

generation plants, schools, factories and areas without access to electricity, as well as other applications such highway and stadium lighting. For more information please visit www.mitsubishielectricsolar.com

About Chico Electric

Chico Electric has been in business since 1960 and has grown to be a leading electrical contractor in California. Chico Electric designs and installs solar electric systems for commercial and residential customers, and offers a wide range of high quality electrical services through their construction department, agricultural services department, and quick services department. For more information please visit www.chicoelectric.com.

About Butte College

Butte College, located in Oroville, California is a two year academic institution, offering associate of arts or sciences degrees and general education units to transfer to a four year college or university. The mission of Butte College is to create a student-centered, community-based learning environment which empowers students to become productive, literate, and responsible members of a diverse society. For more information please visit www.butte.edu.

###

CONTACT:

Jenean Smith
Mitsubishi Electric & Electronics USA, Inc.
Photovoltaic Division
5665 Plaza Drive
Cypress CA 90630
(714) 220-6861
Jenean.smith@meus.mea.com

Norm Nielsen
Chico Electric
36 W Eaton Road
Chico, CA 95973
(530) 891-1933 x.202
nnielsen@chicoelectric.com