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Solar power: “It’s the right thing for businesses to do.” -CEO Mogens Smed

Calgary, AB (August 11, 2009) -- Calgary-based DIRTT Environmental Solutions is celebrating the official launch and activation of the company’s solar Photovoltaic (PV) system to supplement power to its office and factory. It is the largest corporate solar PV system in the city of Calgary.

Minister of Environment Rob Renner, representing the Province of Alberta at the launch, applauds DIRTT for their environmentally sustainable business approach. “Everyone has a role to play in conserving energy and being a responsible environmental steward. It’s great to see Alberta businesses stepping up to the plate to do their part,” said Renner.

Deputy Mayor Ric McIver, on behalf of the City of Calgary, congratulated DIRTT for embracing alternative energy sources. “I love that Calgary is the place where innovation and growth in sustainable energy alternatives is happening. Our city, The Heart of the New West, is heading for the future boldly,” said McIver.

DIRTT CEO Mogens Smed is a staunch supporter of alternative energy and encourages business leaders to utilize solar technology as a power source, saying it’s an investment in business and the environment. “Sure, solar technology is going to pay for itself over the years,” says Smed. “But that’s not the point of it. It’s the right thing for businesses to do. Solar is a readily available, pollution-free source of electricity and it is an environmental crime for others not to get onboard.”

Throughout his career, Smed has been a champion of the environment both in his corporate and personal life and received international recognition as Environmental Champion by Interiors and Sources magazine, sharing the roster with the likes of David Suzuki and Theodore Roosevelt.

The 60 solar PV modules on DIRTT’s roof will generate approximately 12,000 kilowatt hours of solar energy each year powering 161 computers, generating 10 percent of Calgary’s total solar energy output.

According to the Pembina Institute, a non-profit organization focused on developing innovative, sustainable energy solutions across Canada, DIRTT’s solar array is generating enough power to displace approximately 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year from Alberta’s coal-based electricity combustion system. “A 10.5 kilowatt system will also prevent the equivalent of nearly five tonnes of coal from being burned each year,” says Tim Weis, director, renewable energy and efficiency at the Pembina Institute. In addition, the solar PV system will save DIRTT \$7,400 in electricity bills each year.

DIRTT ‘Doing It Right This Time’ refers to creating sustainable, successful workspaces by vastly improving the speed, precision, agility and custom abilities of modular interior construction. DIRTT started manufacturing agile architectural solutions in May 2005 and is the leading movable wall manufacturer in North America. Installing the solar array is one part of the company’s overall environmental strategy.

Solar PV Systems convert light to electricity. When light energy strikes a solar cell, electrons are knocked loose from the atoms in the semiconductor material. If electrical conductors are attached to the positive and negative sides, forming an electrical circuit, the electrons can be captured in the form of an electric current.

Only one other commercial space in Calgary uses solar technology to power their business, generating 2,200 kilowatt hours of solar electricity. Five public buildings in Calgary use solar as an alternative energy source, including the U of C Childcare Centre, City Hall and some public schools. *Source: Enmax*

-30-

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