

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
Contact: Chelle Koster Walton
239-699-4754
ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption: Aerial view of solar panels at Bailey's General Store

SanCap Solar Connect congratulates island businesses, organizations

Almost one year since the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) began its SanCap Solar Connect initiative on Sanibel and Captiva islands, it is seeing a number of residential, business, and nonprofit organization solar conversion projects come to fruition. Just recently, Bailey's General Store and Sanibel Captiva Community Bank announced completion of solar panel system installations.

“It is deeply gratifying to see our vision being realized to offer local consumers savings on solar energy conversion through collective buying,” said John McCabe, chair of the SanCap Solar Connect advisory and implementation committees and immediate past president of DDWS board of directors. “We congratulate Bailey's, San Cap bank, and other visionary partners who have already begun to see their conversions making a difference. It just goes to show what great achievements can be realized when the community works together.”

The largest solar project to date on the islands, Bailey's General Store commissioned a 268-module solar photovoltaic system as part of an aggressive mission to reduce its carbon footprint while reducing operating costs and updating lighting and refrigeration. It has plans to further expand its solar system.

Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, in addition to the 70-panel system atop its Sanibel branch, installed solar at its McGregor Boulevard branch just off island. More than 30 SanCap Solar Connect systems have been installed by Florida-based Urban Solar Group, the contractor selected by DDWS' vetting committee.

“We are very pleased with the success of our campaign,” said McCabe. “We are looking forward to upcoming installations at the ‘Ding’ Darling Visitor & Education Center, administration building, and maintenance operation, which will begin this fall. We plan also to add an interpretive exhibit about solar power in the Visitor & Education Center.”

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) was another island nonprofit organization to take advantage of the program at its Bailey Homestead project, McCabe said.

“From the start, solar energy was part of the plan for the sustainable restoration and operation of the SCCF Bailey Homestead Preserve and the Native Landscapes & Garden Center located there,” said SCCF Executive Director Erick Lindblad. “We were happy we could go forward with those plans through the wildlife society’s SanCap Solar initiative.”

“Projects such as this will remain profitable for residents and commercial operations as long as Amendment 1 gets defeated on Florida ballots on Nov. 8,” said McCabe. “Utility companies have designed the confusing amendment to appear beneficial to further development of solar power in Florida, but it is just the opposite. Vote no on Nov. 8 to preserve the integrity of solar power conversion in Florida.”

Based on the success of a number of initiatives in other states, SanCap Solar Connect was the first-ever community-driven solarize program in Florida. The SanCap Solar Connect initiative was made possible partially through funding from solar advocates Fred and Alice Stanback.

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

###