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**WELLS RESERVE AT LAUDHOLM MARKS SOLAR MILESTONE**

WELLS, Maine, March 23, 2015 — On Friday, the Wells Reserve at Laudholm celebrated becoming the first nonprofit in Maine to meet 100 percent of its electricity needs with solar energy. Over the past two years, the reserve installed 248 solar panels that are expected to generate 73,000 kilowatt-hours of electrical energy while preventing 45 tons of carbon from entering the atmosphere each year.

“This action moves us toward full energy independence, lightens our carbon footprint, and sets the bar for Maine’s nonprofits and business community,” said Nik Charov, president of Laudholm Trust. “We want this project to show Mainers this can be done. The science is clear on what is happening to our world and the solutions to our climate problem are right in front of us.”

Paul Dest, director of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, led the reserve’s effort to conserve energy and convert to renewable sources for electricity. “We set some aggressive goals and in less than 3 years we met them. Cutting our energy costs is a tangible reward that will strengthen our science, education, and conservation programs.”

“More importantly, we are doing our part to reduce carbon emissions, taking a critical step toward limiting climate change,” Dest added.

U.S. Senator Angus King (I-Maine) was on hand for the announcement.

“With rising seas and warming waters, estuaries serve as valuable barometers to monitor the mounting effects of global climate change,” said Senator King, a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. “So it is only fitting that the Wells Reserve at Laudholm, a valuable part of NOAA’s national network of estuarine research reserves, is also at the forefront of the important transition to renewable energy sources and the fight against climate change. This major solar power milestone will help combat climate change by reducing oil consumption and curbing carbon emissions, helping to protect and preserve this treasured area in southern Maine for generations to come.”

The reserve’s $200,000 investment in solar infrastructure was made possible by grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Mattina R. Proctor Foundation, and Davis Conservation Foundation, with additional support from the Town of Wells and generous donors to the Wells Reserve at Laudholm. The reserve also received rebates through Efficiency Maine.

The four solar arrays, installed by Portland-based ReVision Energy, “helped us accomplish our initial goals, but we’re not done yet,” said Dest. “As we grow we want to ensure that all our power needs are met through renewable resources.”

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