

Illinois Public, Private Leaders Unite to Bring Energy-Efficiency to the Top-Attended Aquarium in the Nation

CHICAGO, Oct. 20, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- [Governor Pat Quinn and Shedd Aquarium](#) today kicked off the first phase of the institution's clean-energy initiative with the installation of 913 photovoltaic solar panels on top of the aquarium's world-class marine mammal pavilion. In an event held on the roof of the Abbott Oceanarium, the Governor, along with Shedd leadership and Illinois sustainability champions, unveiled the 265-kilowatt project that is the biggest solar installation in any cultural institution in the state of Illinois funded through a public and private partnership.

Shedd Aquarium is a recognized leader in sustainability, conservation and education and today's event is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to protect our natural resources and ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations.

"Shedd's green energy efforts demonstrate how Illinois is paving the way in advancing next-generation clean technology and sustainable energy," Governor Quinn said. "The solar panel project at the aquarium is the start of many progressive changes to our energy economy, serving as a model to integrate sustainability into operations for organizations around the country."

"Protecting and preserving the living world is at the heart of Shedd Aquarium and we understand that conservation and sustainability begin at home in the aquarium," said Ted A. Beattie, S

Shedd President

and CEO. "Collaborative relationships fuel the actions needed to move the needle literally in terms of energy consumption. We're grateful for the generous support from Governor Pat Quinn

as well as our public and private partners to help Shedd be among the first cultural institutions to adopt a comprehensive clean energy model."

The solar electric system is part of Shedd's [Master Energy Roadmap](#) – an ambitious energy initiative aiming to cut energy consumption in half by 2020, transforming it into the nation's first clean energy-powered aquarium. Named the number one attended aquarium in the country in 2012, Shedd worked with public and private energy leaders to advance the building's larger energy management system, bringing Shedd closer to achieving its long-term goal of saving close to 10 million kilowatt hours annually – enough to power 750 households.

The state of Illinois is investing \$205,000 in the \$1.1 million project. The program leverages Illinois'

significant potential for renewable power and heating - wind, solar, and biogas offer both economic and environmental benefits. Wind energy costs have fallen significantly, and modern wind farms provide both stable income for farmers and significant property tax revenues for local governments. Biogas facilities allow livestock owners to transform wastes from pollution into clean energy, and solar thermal technologies offer an increasingly cost-effective alternative to volatile natural gas prices.

Illinois

strongly supports the development of these resources.

As a key organization with the design of Shedd's Master Energy Roadmap and Aquarium's lead partner in solidifying the solar project, Illinois Science and Technology Coalition's President and CEO Mark Harris celebrated the first milestone of the initiative. "Shedd's commitment to sustainable, clean energy sources is an important achievement for the aquarium, the State of Illinois

and the

City of Chicago

," said Harris. "Shedd's solar power technology represents a critical part of our mission at the Coalition that is dedicated to growing

Illinois'

role as a global innovation leader for sustainable energy."

In addition to statewide emphasis on sustainable energy, other local officials applauded the

latest installation. "We are thrilled to see Shedd Aquarium take on significant changes to move toward a complete transition to renewable energy sources. This emphasis on renewable energy sources through initiatives such as Shedd's Energy Roadmap is a priority of the Mayor's and will help motivate sustainable strategies through practical solutions through our entire community in the future," said Karen Weigert, Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Chicago, which was named [the most sustainable large community](#) in 2012.

Under the on-site renewable generation portion of the roadmap, the system will help power life-support equipment to the aquarium's Great Lakes gallery, which showcases the region's diverse native animals including iconic lake sturgeon in a new touch pool exhibit. In addition to reducing costs and enhancing the building's energy reserve and various life support systems, the system supports Shedd's Great Lakes initiative to protect and preserve the lakes by reducing its reliance on traditional energy sources.

The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation provided support for the project, advancing their mission to improve energy efficiency, advance [renewable energy technologies](#) and protect natural areas for communities across Illinois

"It is a significant move to advance sustainability for Shedd and models environmental best practices to millions of visitors every year," said Gabriela Martin, Program Officer for Renewable Energy at Illinois Clean Energy. "By increasing the use of renewable energy resources – such as solar power - we help diversify Illinois' energy portfolio and bring clean energy jobs to our communities."

Schneider Electric, a global specialist in energy management, also provided its turnkey solution and support to help build the photovoltaic system. The solar installation employs the company's end-to-end solar solution, complete with advanced technology elements that will improve solar system operations through real-time monitoring, statistics and key performance indicator (KPI) measurements.

"This is an exciting project for both of our organizations, the State of Illinois and the City of

Chicago

said

Dean Meyer

, Executive Vice President, Buildings Business, Schneider Electric. "As a local business, we're proud to be building on our long-standing relationship with Shedd, helping them achieve their energy goals by providing our complete energy management solutions and services."

Launched in January 2013, Shedd's Master Energy Roadmap designed an innovative "smart building" prototype. Future projects include continued building automation, advanced lighting controls, building analytics, demand response programs and predictive monitoring.

Reflecting on the aquarium's long history and commitment to sustainability, Beattie continued, "We've been doing our part as The World's Aquarium to further our community's world-class reputation through important initiatives such as this one. Over the next five years through our sustainability strategic plan, we are investing in people, animals, the environment, our facility and our future."

NOTE: High resolution images and video are available for download: <https://backup.filesanywhere.com/fs/v.aspx?v=8c6e6a8f605e76b09fa8>

Photo credit:

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Brenna Hernandez

Shedd Aquarium is supported by the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District.

Shedd Aquarium is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums.

About the Partners

John G. Shedd Aquarium, the World's Aquarium and global leader in aquatic science and

conservation, is one of the world's largest indoor aquariums. The facility houses more than 32,500 aquatic animals, representing some 1,500 species of fishes, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, birds and aquatic mammals from waters around the world. Since its opening in 1930, the aquarium's mission has been to enhance public understanding of aquatic life and connect guests to the living world, inspiring them to protect and preserve the planet. Shedd Aquarium is a proud member of the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition.

The [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity](#) 's (DCEO) the [Illinois Energy Office](#) creates jobs and stimulates economic development throughout the state through programs and policies that spur investment in Illinois' Green Economy. The Office of Energy supports research, demonstrations of energy technologies and uses of a variety of educational programs to transfer these cost-effective solutions to private and public sectors of the Illinois economy.

The [Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation](#) is an independent foundation with a mission is to improve energy efficiency, advance the development of renewable energy resources and protect natural areas for people in communities all across Illinois.

As a global specialist in energy management with operations in more than 100 countries, [Schnieder Electric](#) offers integrated solutions across multiple market segments, including leadership positions in Utilities & Infrastructure, Industries & Machines Manufacturers, Non-residential Building, Data Centers & Networks and in Residential. Focused on making energy safe, reliable, efficient, productive and green, the company's 140,000 plus employees achieved sales of 30.8 billion US dollars in 2012, through an active commitment to help individuals and organizations make the most of their energy.

Governor Pat Quinn, Shedd Announce Largest Solar Installation At Cultural Institution In Illinois

Written by Australian Business

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