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1st household-size solar-wind hybrid system in Maryland goes online on Eastern Shore

Renewable energy device “provides more power, more often”

July 1, Columbia, Md. – There’s a new “hybrid” on the street. And though this one also involves energy, it’s not a motor vehicle. It’s the first commercially available solar-wind hybrid system in Maryland sized for a home or small business, and it just began generating power on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

Under the right conditions, this grid-tied device, which features a residential-size wind turbine with six solar panels attached to the turbine’s post, can produce one-third to one-half the power used by the average Maryland home. That’s because the device employs two clean-energy sources at once; and because it uses sun-tracking technology created by Advanced Technology & Research (based in Columbia, Md.) that enables the system’s solar array to produce up to 30% more power than fixed panels.

“Some days it’s windy; some days it’s not,” said Rob Lundahl, an ATR vice president, at the June 29th unveiling of the device. “Many days it’s sunny, sometimes it’s not. The combination of the two, as we like to say, provides more power more often,” Lundahl said, adding that he believes this is also the first such commercially available system in the U.S.

This hybrid sits at the home of Dewayne and Dawn Stewart, easily visible about 150 feet from the road. Fluharty’s Electric of Tilghman, Md., where Dewayne also works, installed the Southwest

Wind Skystream wind turbine about four years ago, and the tracking solar system was just added. “Now not only are we taking advantage of the wind power but also sun power,” said Dewayne Stewart. “My wife is a day care provider out of our home and she uses electric all day, every day. Our use of green power is not only saving on our electric bill, but more importantly, it is setting a good example for our children and the children in her day care,” he added.

Fluharty’s began installing wind turbines about five years ago and is a Southwest Wind dealer and installer, said owner Tim Fluharty, and the idea of combining wind and solar power intrigued the company. “If someone could come up with a good hybrid system, we’d like to give it a try,’ and this is it,” Fluharty said. “In addition to the energy and cost savings, the hybrid system will remove about 10,000 pounds a year of greenhouse gases from the environment, something that’s important in an area as vulnerable to climate change as the Eastern Shore,” added Fluharty, a life-long Tilghman resident. He said that for the average buyer, the solar part of the system should pay for itself in about six years with the availability of good solar renewable energy credits (SRECs), while the wind component should take 10-15 years because the wind credits aren’t as strong.

Talbot County Engineer Ray Clark said that the Department of Public Works also is interested in the idea of combining wind and solar power in the same system. The agency is finalizing the design of a 50-kilowatt wind turbine for Tilghman Island’s wastewater treatment plant, also is looking at incorporating a solar array producing up to 50 kilowatts more of electricity. “Being here today allows me the opportunity to learn more about the sun-tracking system that could be used within our proposed solar energy system,” Clark added.

[QUOTE FROM MALCOLM COULD GO IN THIS GRAF.] In addition to helping consumers and small businesses cut their energy costs with clean energy, the hybrid’s solar module—along with three other ATR tracking solar offerings—can benefit Maryland by helping generate jobs, since nearly all of the trackers’ components are made and assembled right in the state, Lundahl said. He thanked the Maryland Energy Administration, which awarded ATR a CEEDI (Clean

Energy and Economic Development Incentive) grant to help defray initial production costs, and Governor Martin O'Malley for their support. "The MEA really stepped up," he said. "This tracking technology is exportable not only to all counties in Maryland, but to the entire U.S. and even beyond," Lundahl added.

Advanced Technology and Research is a Maryland company manufacturing innovative energy-related and other products for a world market (www.ATRsolartech.com).

Attachments: Photos of hybrid system, including ribbon-cutting ceremony