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Ribbon-Cutting Celebration for Mi Casa's 40.5kW Solar Energy Array

April 14, 2011 (DENVER): Together with the Governor's Energy Office, Mi Casa Resource Center will host a brief celebration at 10 a.m. on Friday, April 15, to celebrate the completion of a 40.5kW solar energy array at Mi Casa's Acoma Street location.

The cash flow from the federal economic stimulus may be drying up. But the solar array being installed at Mi Casa - funded through the Governor's Energy Office, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and private investment - will have an enduring positive impact in the form of hands-on experience and employment for jobless individuals and cost savings for the organization dedicated to training disadvantaged workers to participate in Colorado's new energy economy.

- **What:** Ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate completion of solar energy array, which will result in cost-savings and increased investment in green job training for disadvantaged workers.
- **Who:** Governor's Energy Office; Christine Marquez-Hudson, CEO/Executive Director of Mi Casa; Doug Wells, private investor; Geronimo Adams, Mi Casa graduate and solar installer
- **When:** 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. Friday, April 15
- **Where:** Mi Casa Resource Center, 360 Acoma Street, Denver, CO 80223
- **Video and Interview opportunity:** There will be a visual opportunity to film the solar panels from the roof. Reporters can also interview Geronimo Adams, a Mi Casa graduate..

“This project is a perfect example of public-private partnership where multiple goals are accomplished - carbon emissions and fossil fuel consumption are offset by electricity generated from renewable sources, private investors supply capital to jump start projects that would otherwise be delayed or never happen; and local jobs are supported for installation labor, engineering and design,” says Doug Wells, President of Renewable Energy Ventures, the private firm investing in Mi Casa's solar array as part of a power purchase agreement.

One of the jobs supported by this project belongs to Geronimo Adams, a Mi Casa graduate who will be working to install the solar array. Geronimo, a single father who shares custody of his six children, completed Mi Casa's Green Construction & Energy training program in December and is looking for full-time work; he was laid off from his job as a commercial plumber in January 2010. The installation job at Mi Casa is temporary, but Geronimo hopes to leverage the on-the-job training experience into a full-time permanent position. "Mi Casa has provided me with a lot of support as I work to advance my situation," Geronimo says. "I am honored to be a part of this project because ultimately it will create opportunities for other people who need training to make a career change."

"We believe that Mi Casa's solar array, which will be visible from the street, will be a powerful symbol of our commitment to green jobs training and helping *all* Coloradans participate in the new energy economy," says Christine Marquez-Hudson, CEO/Executive Director of Mi Casa.

Mi Casa's 40.5kW solar array will produce an estimated 53,330 kWh per year, which will offset roughly 24% of Mi Casa's total energy consumption. Mi Casa also invested in wide-ranging energy efficiency performance upgrades to maximize the savings from solar energy. Through Energy Outreach Colorado, Mi Casa wrapped the hot water heater, installed a direct digital control system, replaced six old AC units with Energy Star units, insulated HVAC equipment, and replaced 112 light fixtures and ballasts with CFL bulbs and energy efficient ballasts at the agency's headquarters at 360 Acoma Street.

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About Mi Casa Resource Center: Mi Casa is among the oldest and largest Latino-serving organizations in Colorado, founded in 1976 by eight Head Start mothers in west Denver. Mi Casa creates new opportunities through career education to help workers with limited skills and education get a job launch promising careers; business education to help underserved entrepreneurs forge a path to prosperity through self-employment; and out-of-school enrichment programs for youth focused on academic success. 35 years, Mi Casa has been committed to advancing the economic success of Latino and low-income families.

Mi Casa's **Green Construction & Energy** career training program is a nine-week course to help workers launch careers in the renewable energy, energy efficiency and green construction sectors. Core curriculum focuses on sustainable construction, safety, efficiency and performance upgrades, solar energy technology, as well as soft skills and work readiness training. Mi Casa's approach to workforce development is based on best practices for putting disadvantaged individuals back to work. Mi Casa utilizes a *sector-focused* approach to career training, which relies heavily on the input of industry experts and employers, from the design and implementation of the curriculum through the placement of graduates in full-time jobs.

A **power purchase agreement** (PPA) is an operating agreement whereby a third party entity can own and operate a solar array located on a host property. In other words, the building owner provides the location and the system provider installs, owns and operates the array. The electricity generated by the array is then sold back to the property owner. This type of arrangement allows renewable energy through solar to be implemented with reduced or no capital expense on the part of the property owner. Capital costs are recovered over time with the electricity generated.