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**HOMEBUILDER HELPS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HOMEBUYERS FIGHT BACK AGAINST
ENERGY CRISIS WITH SOLAR AND "GREEN" FEATURES**

Watsonville, California: Palo Alto based homebuilder Clarum Homes announced today that it's newest housing development, Cherry Blossom, in Watsonville will be the Bay Area's first subdivision to be equipped with photovoltaic solar panels as standard equipment and that the community will host its grand opening event on Saturday, August 25, 2001.

Each of the homes at the Cherry Blossom community will come with a solar electric system that will produce 1,500-3,200 kilowatt-hours of pollution free electricity per year, depending on the system size and orientation of the home. That's about 25-50% of the annual requirements of a typical California home, and should save homeowners an average of \$30-\$55 per month on their PG&E bill.

How do the systems work? The photovoltaic or "PV" rooftop systems convert sunlight directly into electricity. The power feeds directly into the home's electrical system, energizing lights and appliances. Any excess power generated during the day actually spins the home's utility meter backward, building up a power bill credit. An inverter box is installed on every home that is connected to the power grid. A display unit is installed in the homes next to the thermostat so that the homeowner can monitor how much energy the system is producing at any given time.

Not only are the photovoltaic systems a clean energy alternative, but the systems will also help homebuyers to get the best rate possible from PG&E. PG&E currently charges for electricity on a four-tiered system. Once the homeowner has consumed their baseline amount of electricity for the month, their rates go up depending on the number of kilowatt hours used. For example, in the summer months the first 234 kWh are charged at \$.1259 per kWh. The next 70 kWh's are charged at \$.1432. The next 164 kWh's are charged at \$.1933 per kWh. All kWh's in excess of those used are charged at \$.2363 per kWh. The photovoltaic net metered system allows the homebuyer to "shave" off the last kilowatt hours used, thereby enabling them to get the best possible rate at all times.

The photovoltaic systems will be supplied by BP Solar, one of the world's largest suppliers of solar electric (or "photovoltaic") systems and components for new homes as well as commercial buildings and

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industrial applications. The company manufactures its solar products in six plants worldwide, including its latest facility in northern California.

"With California's abundant sunshine and increased rebates available from the state, solar energy is an ideal way to combat higher utility bills in California" said Mac Moore, BP Solar's Director of Building and Utility Markets. "It's forward thinking builders like Clarum Homes that are making solar electric systems a practical solution for California homebuyers."

Clarum Homes is very excited about being the builder of northern California's first subdivision to include the solar panels as a standard feature. In addition to the photovoltaic solar systems, Clarum is also incorporating many of the homebuilding industry's new methods of "green" building in their homes.

What is "green" building? Green building is a process that creates homes that minimize the use of resources, reduces harmful effects on the environment, and develops healthier environments for people. Clarum Homes recognizes the need as a homebuilder to participate in the restoration of the planet and the preservation of life on it. Some of the "green" methods being used include "Low-E" windows, increased attic and water line insulation, TechShield radiant roof barriers, energy efficient appliances and systems, ceiling fans, fluorescent lighting and recycled building products. One of the more innovative features is clearly the TechShield radiant roof barrier as it reflects away 97% of the sun's heat with its heat reflective sheathing. TechShield can reduce attic temperatures by 30 degrees and reduces the heat transfer from the attic to the living space by 50%. All of these "green" features are designed to reduce heat loss, reduce need for cooling, improve comfort, improve efficiency, provide electricity savings or eliminate the use of limited natural resources.

In addition to the photovoltaic solar systems and the "green" building methods being used at Cherry Blossom, Clarum Homes has partnered with the Davis Energy Group in a California Energy Commission funded project called Alternatives to Compressor Cooling, which was instituted to reduce peak electricity demand. Under the project, a prototype "Night Breeze" heating, cooling, and ventilation system was installed in the model home of the Cherry Blossom community. The "Night Breeze" system is designed to eliminate the need for air conditioning in mild climates and improve indoor air quality. In summer the system ventilates the home with filtered cool night air, cooling the interior surfaces (walls, ceiling, floor). During daytime these surfaces absorb heat to maintain comfortable indoor temperatures. Standard Cherry Blossom home features such as the radiant barrier and efficient windows, plus thicker drywall used in the model, contribute to the performance of the NightBreeze system. In winter the system introduces just the right amount of outside air to keep indoor air fresh, and heats the home using a variable speed fan. Clarum Homes is one of only two homebuilders in California who opted to partici-

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pate in the program to demonstrate this technology, which has been under development for more than five years. Once the model is complete, the Davis Energy Group will be monitor the home for one year to determine how successful the "Night Breeze" system is in reducing energy costs and improving comfort. David Springer, president of Davis Energy Group, said "the Cherry Blossom home designs come very close to meeting our design criteria for maximizing summer comfort. We were very pleased to have the privilege of working with such a motivated and informed builder."

According to Clarum Homes Vice President, John Suppes, "the Cherry Blossom community is the embodiment of an ideal I've been pursuing for many years. I was first introduced to the solar and "green" building methods at a national homebuilder conference in Atlanta. I came back and immediately started incorporating the ideas into our communities so that we could offer more efficient homes and give our homebuyers the opportunity to actually produce electricity in the midst of this energy crisis we are facing. I feel very strongly about the need to promote sustainable energy sources and from this point forward, all of the homes built by Clarum Homes will be designed and built using the photo-voltaic systems and as many "green" building features as we can afford to include. Our goal is to provide the consumer with a way to fight back against California's energy crisis by providing homes that are more efficient and environmentally friendly."

Clarum Homes Project Manager, Bruce "Bud" Wilkes has been very involved in the selection and installation of the solar systems and all the other "green" features at Cherry Blossom project site. He comments, "If we are not solving the energy problem, we are part of the problem. We, at Clarum Homes, feel that eventually homebuyers are going to demand these energy conscious features and we're excited about being one of the first to offer these features. I admit that it's all new to us, but its great to be part of the solution. We are hoping that if we provide solar and "green" building features that other builders will follow in our path and we can all contribute to a more sustainable environment."

The Cherry Blossom development is located two miles east of Highway 1 on Loma Prieta Avenue between Airport Boulevard and Green Valley Road in Watsonville. The development consists of thirty-one (31) new single-family homes. These craftsman-style 1600 square foot two story homes offer three and four bedrooms with 2 ½ bathrooms, two car garages and inviting front porches. The homes will be highlighted with architectural siding, brick and stone accents, and decorative garage door windows. Pricing starts at \$370,000.

The grand opening party and opening of the model and sales office will be held on Saturday, August 25, 2001 from 10:00am to 6:00pm. Representatives from Clarum Homes, BP Solar and Davis Energy Group will be there to answer questions regarding the new community and it's exciting solar and "green" building features. The sales office will be open daily from 10:00am to 6:00pm. For sales information,

interested homebuyers should contact the Sales Manager, Joyce Byrd, at (831) 724-8494.

Directions to Cherry Blossom:

From Highway 1, exit at the Airport Boulevard exit. Turn left on Airport Boulevard. Turn right on Loma Prieta Avenue. The Cherry Blossom sales office and model is located at 19 Loma Prieta Avenue.

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