

CLARUM HOMES

Our Name Means Quality.

Clarum Builds Nation's Largest Solar Energy Affordable Apartment Community Using GE Technology

PALO ALTO, CA (February 24, 2005) – Clarum Homes has just completed the construction of the Vista Montaña apartment community in Watsonville, California which houses the nation's largest building integrated solar electric system ever installed in an apartment community. GE Energy supplied the 60 kilowatt system for the complex, making it possible for this community to produce over 90 megawatt hours of electricity annually.

GE's roof-integrated system replaces the flat cement roof tiles and blends seamlessly with the roofline. The integrated system provides a unique combination of functionality and attractiveness, adding value to the community and its residents.

In addition to the substantial solar electric system, the Vista Montaña apartment community was designed with the goal of including as many other energy efficiency and green building features as possible, without sacrificing the comfort of its residents. As part of the Department of Energy's Building America program, Vista Montaña was also one of Building America's first near Zero Energy Homes communities. ConSol, Clarum's energy consultant and one of Building America's team leaders, used a systems engineering approach to produce homes on a community scale that used 40% less energy. The homes were engineered to minimize each home's energy loads through ConSol's ComfortWise® program so that most of the electrical needs could be met by the solar system. The ComfortWise® program includes the installation of tightly sealed duct work, a high-efficiency heating and ventilation system, smart glass (low-e windows), and third party testing and certification. Hydronic heating units were used to achieve energy efficiency through the combined function of heating both the water and the living space. Over sixty percent (60%) of the framing on this project was done with engineered lumber, and recycled-content decking was used for all patios and balconies.

The Vista Montaña Apartments community brings much needed affordable housing to Watsonville with its one hundred thirty-two (132) apartment homes, many of which were designed for larger families. The community is located at the intersection of East Lake Blvd. and Wagner Avenue, adjacent to the City of Watsonville's new 14-acre John Martin Franich Park and the Ann Soldo Elementary School.

Financed with California Statewide Communities Development Authority tax exempt bonds, federal and state tax credits and City of Watsonville HOME Program funds, the community offers apartments to residents earning incomes at 50%-60% of Santa Cruz County area median income levels. The Vista Montaña Apartment community includes a community center, state-of-the-art fitness center and a computer learning center for resident use and after-school programs.

"With skyrocketing energy costs and continued concerns over energy shortages, Clarum's entire company focus is to combine green building practices and alternative energy solutions with affordable and entry-level housing," said John Suppes, Vice President of Clarum Homes. "Not only do green building practices and energy efficient systems make sense for the environment, but they also provide a more comfortable and healthier environment to live in."

"The improved aesthetics and ease of installation offered by our roof integrated solar tiles gives Clarum the architectural freedom to incorporate solar energy into each and every home and apartment building," said Ali Iz, General Manager GE Energy – Solar Technologies, "

"Clarum's efforts validate that production home builders can successfully build energy efficient, attractive and affordable housing without sacrificing quality or aesthetics," said Rob Hammon, Ph.d., ConSol principal.

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About Clarum Homes

Founded in 1994, and headquartered in Palo Alto, California, Clarum Homes is a family-owned development company devoted to building exceptional new home communities and apartments in California. Over the last several years Clarum has become California's leader in green building through its involvement in building zero energy homes under the U.S. Department of Energy's Zero Energy Home initiative, and through its participation in the Building Industry Institute's California Green Builder Program. Clarum has incorporated a strong commitment to the environment into all of its design and building practices. Currently, Clarum is under construction on the nation's largest 100% zero-energy-home community, and is recognized as an industry pioneer for installing innovative energy efficiency systems and sustainable building products. In 2005, Clarum has plans to start construction on at least seven new zero energy home communities in locations throughout California in Watsonville, San Leandro, Menlo Park, Danville, Borrego Springs, Blythe and Desert Hot Springs. For more information please visit www.clarum.com.

About GE Energy

GE Energy (www.gepower.com) is one of the world's leading suppliers of power generation and energy delivery technology, with 2004 revenues of \$17.3 billion. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, GE Energy provides equipment, service and management solutions across the power generation, oil and gas, transmission and distribution, distributed power and energy rental industries.

GE Energy's current range of solar energy products includes solar cells, modules and pre-packaged systems. The modules range from 35 to 165 watts, while system designs can range from hundreds of watts to megawatts and can be used in either on-grid or off-grid applications. GE Energy's solar equipment is manufactured at its Newark, Delaware facility.

About ConSol

ConSol is a leading developer of energy efficiency design in new home construction. ConSol offers a full suite of services, including engineering design, energy code compliance, its turn-key ComfortWise®, and energy consulting. It works with various entities including the Department of Energy, the California Energy Commission, and The Building Industry Institute to further the cause of energy efficiency and green building as well as improved buyer comfort. ConSol provides builders of single-family homes, apartments and condominiums custom-tailored strategic insights and direction based on years of experience.

Press Contacts:

Clarum Homes
John Suppes
Vice President, Development
+1 650 322 7069 x22
john@clarum.com

Nicole Gittleson
Vice President, Marketing
+1 650 322 7069 x24
nicole@clarum.com

GE Energy
Dave Nyberg
GE Energy
+1 408 499 9429
dave.nyberg@ge.com

Vista Montaña Apartments
Laura Alvarado
Community Manager
790 Vista Montaña Drive, #105
Watsonville, CA 95076
+1 831 763 9486
vistamontana@clarum.com

ConSol
Rob Hammon, Ph.d.
Principal
+1 209 473 5000
rhammon@consol.ws