

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 28, 2013

PRESS CONTACT
Shannon Koehle
skoehle@empower-solar.com
516-837-3459 X.163

Big Geyser to Run Distribution Center with Solar Power with Support from NYSERDA

QUEENS, N.Y. -- Big Geyser, a major distributor of non-alcoholic beverages, has installed a 408-kilowatt (kW) solar power system, with funding assistance from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative.

The project, installed by EmPower Solar, is expected to produce enough power to meet the company's yearly energy needs, with enough extra electricity left over to charge electric forklifts and delivery trucks.

"As long as the sun rises, this project yields an attractive and predictable return on our investment for at least the next 25 years," said Big Geyser CFO Rich Richer. "As a privately owned company, we can take the longer view and look for investments of this quality. We see a positive public benefit by reducing demand on the energy grid, as well as reducing our utility bills."

Big Geyser distributes Vitaminwater, Smartwater, Monster, Sparkling Ice, Nesquik, Apple and Eve, Muscle Milk, Body Armor, Zico, SunnyD, Honest Tea, Hint, Illy and GuS, and is based in Maspeth.

NYSERDA provided financial incentives for Big Geyser through its Competitive Photovoltaic Program and its Solar Electric Incentive Program. Both programs are part of the NY-Sun initiative, a program that seeks to significantly increase the amount of solar installations across the state.

"Big Geyser is to be commended for not just installing enough solar power to run its factory, but also for planning for the future needs of an electric vehicle-based delivery fleet. The company is a true partner in the State's efforts under Governor Cuomo to increase the amount of solar in its renewable energy portfolio while reducing business expenses through investments in clean energy," said Francis J. Murray Jr., President and CEO, NYSERDA.

Big Geyser began as a small family business operating out of founder Irving Hershkowitz's trunk and now serves thousands of retail locations throughout New York City, Westchester, Putnam, Nassau, and Suffolk counties.

Five years ago, Big Geyser partnered with Howard Ehrenshaft of Energy Conservation Group of America and NYSERDA on a very successful warehouse lighting project, and Big Geyser quickly recognized the company could dramatically reduce energy costs with solar power. Ehrenshaft helped navigate the maze of several solar proposals, tax credits, grants, and incentives and was able to integrate EmPower Solar's solution with a "cool roof" enhancement -- a white roof that reduces heat absorption -- as a comprehensive package for Big Geyser.

"The biggest challenge that The Energy Conservation Group of America faced was the weather. Once we had the proper conditions for applying our cool roof coating everything went well due do the tremendous amount of cooperation displayed by all parties involved," said Ehrenshaft. "We expect our cool roof to

enhance the solar output for many years to come while at the same time reducing the air conditioning kWh usage by keeping the roof very close to the ambient temperature during the cooling season.”

EmPower Solar’s commercial sales representative Steven Engelmann met with Big Geyser’s CEO Lewis Hershkowitz and Richer and worked with the company to meet the firm’s energy goals.

“The Big Geyser solar project exemplifies why solar makes sense for businesses today,” said Engelmann. It was a pleasure to work closely with Big Geyser’s team to make the solar energy system meet its technical, logistical, and financial goals.”

After a six-month delay caused by Hurricane Sandy, installation work commenced in April. EmPower completed a 408 kW solar array paired with AE inverters to produce 440,000 kW-hours, more than the annual energy consumption used at the Big Geyser facility.

Big Geyser hopes to add electric forklifts and trucks to its fleet that will be recharged with any excess solar energy generated by the new solar installation, further reducing demand for high-cost propane and diesel fuels.

Big Geyser is also eligible for additional savings through a federal tax credit and accelerated depreciation.

“We commend Big Geyser for pursuing a project that benefits its bottom line and also has positive societal and ratepayer benefits. This partnership demonstrates the alignment of federal, state, and city policy, and smart, private sector participants,” said David G. Schieren, CEO of EmPower Solar.

“Big Geyser has made a pair of wise business and environmental decisions by choosing solar energy and a white roof for its building,” said Robert Schimmenti, Vice President of Engineering and Planning for Con Edison, the utility that serves New York City. “Solar panels and ‘cool roofs’ save our customers money, reduce carbon emissions, and help us maintain reliable service when demand for electricity is highest.”



###