



**St. Mary's College of Maryland**  
at Historic St. Mary's City

## **College Switches to 100% “Green” Electricity With Student-Funded Initiative**

### **First Public Institution in Maryland to Reach Goal**

(St. Mary's City, MD) October 24, 2007—St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) took another giant step toward carbon neutrality with the purchase of credits from renewable energy sources for 100% of its annual electricity consumption, taking effect immediately. The College is the first public institution in the state of Maryland to adopt such clean-energy standards. Ninety-six percent of the purchase is to come from student funds. The shift to renewable energy will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions the College produces by 14.2 million pounds. The announcement was made today in celebration of Campus Sustainability Day.

The College has purchased renewable energy credits (RECs) equal to 100% of its electricity requirements from three firms: Clean Currents, covering 83% of the RECs; the College's local electric utility, Southern Maryland Electrical Cooperative (SMECO), covering 9.5%; and Community Energy, 7.5%.

“We are proud to be pioneering this program, meeting 100% of the College's electricity needs with clean energy and joining forces with the EPA's Green Power Partnership,” said Maggie O'Brien, president of the College. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently recognized the College on its purchase of 100% green power.

The clean-energy purchase the College is making from Clean Currents and Community Energy is from 100% wind power, while SMECO uses a combination of wind, solar, and biomass energy sources.

Clean Currents is a clean-energy broker that promotes global warming solutions by helping businesses and institutions take greater responsibility for protecting the environment while conducting their operations

“As a leading clean-energy business headquartered in Maryland, we are delighted to deliver clean, renewable energy credits to this highly regarded state educational institution,” said Gary Skulnik, co-founder and president of Clean Currents. “This wind power purchase is a big step toward fulfilling our vision of making renewable energy easily accessible to every school and

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Founded in 1840 as Maryland's “monument school” commemorating the state's first capital, St. Mary's College of Maryland provides a high-caliber liberal arts education typically associated with prestigious private colleges while maintaining the affordability and accessibility of a public college.

- 1,934 men and women
- Designated the Maryland state honors college in 1992.
- Consistently ranked among the top liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Princeton Review*, and the *Fiske Guide*.
- Selective admissions – SAT average of 1252
- Highest 6-year graduation rate for all Maryland public colleges and universities
- Opportunities for independent student research through the senior thesis, the St. Mary's Project
- Waterfront campus along the St. Mary's River in Southern Maryland
- National 2004 Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association Co-ed Champions

business in Maryland that wants to play a role in reducing our state's collective carbon footprint.”

Clean Currents will work with the College on an outreach effort starting in early 2008. They will team up with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network to conduct educational outreach and programming on campus to show students, faculty and staff ways that they can reduce their personal and collective carbon footprint to fight global warming.

“One of our goals in the procurement of RECs was to educate the community about the function and availability of renewable energy,” said Larry Hartwick, co-chair of the College's sustainability committee. “RECs provide marketplace incentives for the creation and operation of renewable energy generating plants.”

Buying green power typically involves purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), which represent the environmental attributes of clean energy sources. They act as a claim check on the clean, renewable energy generated by wind, solar or other renewable energy sources. When a business, institution or residence buys RECs, they are helping to directly reduce global warming and air pollution through the clean energy put on the grid on their behalf. The more RECs purchased, the more clean renewable energy is moved onto the power grid and the less polluting sources are emitted into our environment.

A committee of students, staff, and faculty put together a portfolio of renewable energy credits after reviewing seven proposals. Each firm brings a unique feature to the portfolio.

“We couldn't be happier to assist St. Mary's College in its laudable effort to support our environment through the purchase of renewable energy credits,” said Austin J. Slater, Jr., SMECO's President and CEO. “This is but another example of how the College and its students put their strongly held beliefs into action.”

Last semester, a student initiative overwhelmingly passed to fund the purchase of renewable energy credits. Students voted to tax themselves \$45,000 a year and give the funds towards lowering the College's carbon footprint.

The co-president of the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC), Rachel Clement said, “The green power initiative is a crucial step forward into a more just and sustainable future that we and subsequent generations will be living and working in.”

“Student initiatives and collaboration with College staff is a shining example of how communities can constructively address climate change,” Maggie O'Brien said. “Through energy conservation, the purchase of renewable energy credits, and the design of green buildings, the College's carbon footprint has been reduced by 18.7 million pounds of greenhouse gases—a startling achievement in one year.” Goodpaster Hall, a pilot program for green buildings for the state of Maryland, was dedicated on October 13, 2007.

St. Mary's College of Maryland is ranked one of the best liberal arts colleges in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, *The Princeton Review* and *Kiplinger's*. With roots going back to 1840, SMCM is the state's only public honors college, offering the academic excellence of a top private college with the openness and affordability of public education.