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For Immediate Release

Denver Solar Tour 2005 Provides Examples of Innovative, Low-Cost, Low-Energy Homes

Golden, CO – September 12, 2005 – With the cost of natural gas continuing to rise, this year's Denver Tour of Solar Homes will be a certain draw. This self-guided home tour provides an opportunity to learn about cost-efficient strategies to significantly reduce energy bills while creating a positive effect on the environment.

The tour takes place on Saturday, October 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is sponsored by the Colorado Renewable Energy Society (CRES). This year's tour is particularly relevant in light of Colorado's passage of Amendment 37 last year, which requires that the state's seven largest utilities obtain 10% of their electricity from renewable sources by the year 2015. Of that amount, 4% will come from solar energy. The rules of the solar tax rebates and credits are likely to be finalized at the end of this year, making solar rebates a reality next year—both at the federal level in the new Energy Policy Act with an income tax credit of up to \$2,000 per solar system and at the state level due to Amendment 37 with rebates of possibly up to \$4 per watt for photovoltaics. This could dramatically reduce the cost of solar systems by about half.

"The mission of the Colorado Renewable Energy Society is to significantly increase the use of clean, renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies in our state," said Pamm McFadden, a solar architect and this year's solar tour chair. "Through CRES' sponsorship of the solar tour, we remain committed to educating Colorado political leaders and consumers about solar and other energy choices that are cost-effective, readily available and architecturally aesthetic."

The Denver tour is part of the 10th annual National Tour of Solar Homes sponsored by the American Solar Energy Society in Boulder. Last year 50,800 visitors participated in solar tours taking place in 38 states and 1,589 communities. In Colorado, more than 1,000 people participated in seven cities and towns across the state.

The 2005 Denver Tour of Solar Homes will feature 12 solar and energy-efficient homes and buildings:

- The newly built Zero Energy Habitat for Humanity home in Wheat Ridge, which includes passive solar heating, a solar hot water system, grid-tied photovoltaic (PV) modules, natural daylighting, and energy-efficient windows and appliances.
- The extraordinary home of Ronal Larson, chair-elect of the American Solar Energy Society, and his wife Gretchen. The Larsons purchased their 650-square foot off-grid home—the winner of the 2002 Solar Decathlon competition—and are expanding it into a 2,700 square foot residence. The house is capable of indefinitely maintaining its heating, cooling, lighting and electrical systems without any form of outside energy.
- The Industrial Solar Technology Corporation headquarters building in Golden. The company specializes in the installation and service of solar technology systems that deliver thermal energy for heating hot water and heating buildings, and will have displays that showcase cutting-edge solar thermal technologies for residential and commercial applications.

Registration includes educational workshops presented by the Colorado Energy Science Center (CESC) from September 24 to October 4. The workshops are geared for do-it-yourself homeowners and will address topics such as solar design, energy efficiency, and photovoltaics. Attendees must pre-register to reserve limited space by calling 303-216-2026 or by registering online at: www.energyscience.org.

Homes are open to tour participants from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday, with tour registration, guidebooks and maps available October 1 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) Visitor Center at 15013 Denver West Parkway near I-70 and Denver West in Golden. Tour attendees can also visit exhibits addressing sustainable and renewable energy solutions when they register.

Tour registration is \$15 per carload for a self-guided tour or \$35 per person for lunch and a guided bus tour to a selection of homes and buildings. Advance reservations for the bus tour are required. For reservations and information call CRES at 303-806-5317 or visit its website at: cres-energy.org.

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