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Rotary Club in St. Thomas Receives \$55,000 to Complete Solar Refrigeration System for Bordeaux Farmer's Market

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L2r: St. Thomas Rotary East Eco Club members Katherine Shegrud, Rev. Debbi Jackson, Leslie White, Doug White and Rev. Andrew Jackson present a check to We Grow Food Inc. President Eldridge Thomas. By. ROTARY CLUB OF ST. THOMAS EAST ECO.

Rotary Club of St. Thomas East ECO announced Tuesday that it received a \$55,000 Rotary International Global grant for a solar refrigeration system at the Bordeaux Farmer's Market.

Rotary East Eco presented the check to We Grow Food Inc. (WGFI), which operates the Farmer's Market, on Sunday.

The 15-kilowatt PV array and 15 kW lithium battery backup will provide solar power for the refrigeration system and will guarantee the availability of power to the entire Bordeaux Farmer's Market, while also ensuring the system will produce net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to the release.

Funding for the entire project came from a variety of Rotary and other local sources.

Local Rotary donations included St. Thomas Rotary East Eco Club and Rotary District 7020. Rotary East Eco's contribution came from a private donation by Brad Camrud through Solarize St. Thomas' "Share the Sun" Program.

Rotary International partners in the Global Grant included the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor North, Michigan, and Rotary District 6380, the Rotary Club of Toledo, Ohio, and District 6600, the Rotary Club of Boise, Idaho, and District 5400, the Rotary Club of Hanalei Bay, Kauai, HI, and the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG), Eastern North America Regional Chapter, according to the release.

Additional local support for the project came from the Virgin Islands Community Foundation, which donated \$20,000 for the solar installation, and a 10'x10' walk-in cooler. A backup generator was donated by the Food Producers Network of World Central Kitchen.

The solar installation will be completed by Silver Sun Solar.

According to the release, with the ability to refrigerate farm products utilizing solar energy routinely and reliably, the Bordeaux Farmer's Market will benefit from:

- An estimated solar energy savings of \$259,570 for the farmers over 25 years which will contribute to the island's community economic development.
- Battery back-up power during frequent power outages or storms providing the WGFI with Resilience and Disaster Preparedness capabilities.
- A reduction in food waste since perishable items will now be able to be properly stored for future use or sale rather than be discarded.
- An enhancement to our local food security.
- Clean Energy. 333 Tons of CO2 emissions reduced over 20 years.
- A reduction to the farmers high energy burden, which is twice that of the US farmers.
- Continued promotion of locally grown organic food.
- Encouragement and incentives for the adoption of a Plant Rich Diet.
- Promotion of Energy Equity and Climate Justice