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For Immediate Release

New Research Facility to Test Home Energy Improvements

COCOA, Jan. 14, 2011 – Recognizing the need for statewide energy efficiency, UCF’s Florida Solar Energy Center celebrates the completion of its newest research facility for testing energy improvements in new and existing homes. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for this endeavor was held today on UCF’s Cocoa campus.

Initial research at the new facility will focus on energy improvement potentials in vintage Florida homes. Those constructed prior to 1975 make up 63 percent of Florida’s more than eight million existing homes, which represents a substantial energy and cost savings potential for cost-effective, “deep” home energy improvements, or retrofits. Prospective savings could result in 30 to 50 percent of current residential energy use.

Funded by the state’s Florida Energy Systems Consortium, the research facility was instrumental in attracting a major multi-million dollar, four-year research grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

“As we address greenhouse gas emissions, we have to look at retrofitting existing homes. This facility will be instrumental in researching the impacts of home energy efficiency improvements in hot climates,” said Mr. David Lee, U.S. Department of Energy’s Director of Residential Building Programs.

The facility consists of two side-by-side homes that will assist researchers in evaluating a large variety of both envelope and systems improvements. The homes will be heavily instrumented, and occupancy effects will be simulated by scheduled computer-controlled heat and moisture generation and appliance use. Monitored results from these experiments will test and verify computer simulation models now in widespread use for existing and new home energy efficiency evaluation.

For more information about this new research facility, contact Robin Vieira, Buildings

Research Director at robin@fsec.ucf.edu or 321-638-1404.

FSEC – Creating Energy Independence: The Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC), a research institute of the University of Central Florida, is the largest and most active state-supported energy research institute in the nation. Current divisions and their research activities include Advanced Energy Research: alternative transportation systems, hydrogen fuel and fuel cells; Buildings Research: energy-efficient buildings; and Solar Energy: solar water and pool heating and solar electric and distributed generation systems. For more information about the center, visit <http://www.floridaenergycenter.org> or call the FSEC Public Affairs Office at 321-638-1015.

UCF Stands For Opportunity: The University of Central Florida is a metropolitan research university that ranks as the 2nd largest in the nation with more than 56,000 students. UCF's first classes were offered in 1968. The university offers impressive academic and research environments that power the region's economic development. UCF's culture of opportunity is driven by our diversity, Orlando environment, history of entrepreneurship and our youth, relevance and energy. For more information, visit <http://news.ucf.edu>.

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PR11-01