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Solar Panel Array Saves Money, Provides Hands-On Engineering Experience

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Ten percent of all annual energy used by Cedarville University — the energy that powers the foaming machines at its coffee shop, charges students’ laptops in the residence halls and allows worship music to play through the speakers at chapel — comes from Cedarville’s solar array located just southwest of campus. This eco-friendly array saves money, encourages engineering research and fosters community between the university and the Village of Cedarville.

In 2012, Cedarville University and the Village of Cedarville partnered to establish the solar array field located behind the Cedar Cliff Falls at Indian Mound Reserve Park. Cedarville University owns the 10-acre field, and Melink of Milford, Ohio, a global provider of clean, renewable energy sources, owns the solar array panels.

As part of the project, Melink installed an educational touch-screen display located outside the Stevens Student Center. The display shows real-time statistics about the effectiveness of the solar array.

Cedarville has utilized the solar energy produced by those panels for the past six years, accounting for 10 percent of the university’s energy, according to Rod Johnson, associate vice president for operations. "While the array itself was designed to be budget-neutral, we have been pleased that it has actually saved approximately \$80,000 through the first four years of operation."

In 2016, three mechanical engineering seniors used two extra solar panels, gifted from Melink, for their senior project. The students built a direct-current-powered electrical system for the Engineering Projects Laboratory indoor fan. The system has not yet been installed.

"The solar panels have proven to be a worthwhile investment into the environment, our engineering program, community and this university," said Dr. Bob Chasnov, dean and senior professor of engineering.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,963 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.

Subhead: Cedarville University solar panel array has provided \$80,000 in savings, clean energy, community ties and engaging engineering projects over the past six years.