CITY OF AUSTIN – AUSTIN ENERGY
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

AGENDA DATE: 05/13/2010

SUBJECT: Approve an ordinance authorizing acceptance of $450,000 in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Energy and amending the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Austin Energy Operating Budget Special Revenue Fund of Ordinance No. 20090914-002 to appropriate $450,000 to promote the use of solar energy as part of a special project in partnership with the Department of Energy's Solar America Cities program.

AMOUNT & SOURCE OF FUNDING: Funding is available from the U.S. Department of Energy. Austin Energy will fund an in-kind match in the amount of $375,000 available in the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Operating Budget of Austin Energy. The Austin Independent School District will fund an in-kind match in the amount of $75,000.

FISCAL NOTE: A fiscal note is attached.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION: December 6, 2007 – Approved grant from the Department of Energy establishing the City of Austin as a partner in the Solar America Cities program.

BOARD AND COMMISSION ACTION: To be reviewed by the Electric Utility Commission on April 19, 2010 and by the Resource Management Commission on April 20, 2010.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Karl Rabago, Vice President, Distributed Energy Services; Leslie Libby, Project Manager, Solar Programs, 482-5390.

RELATED ITEM(S):

Through the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar America Cities partnership, 25 major U.S. cities including Austin, are working to accelerate the adoption of solar energy technologies for a cleaner, more secure energy future. The Solar America Cities program has engaged over 180 organizations, including municipal, county, and state agencies, solar companies, universities, utilities, and non-profit organizations. Partnership cities are realizing the benefits of solar energy: power from secure, domestic energy; sustainable, "green" urban development; clean energy production that helps meet greenhouse gas reduction targets and climate change goals; and development of new economic opportunities.

This Department of Energy Solar America Cities special project called "Solar Curriculum Development and Demonstration Projects," will build on the groundwork made by the City of Austin and Austin Energy with the first grant in 2007. These funds will provide the framework for strong partnerships between the City of Austin, the Austin Independent School District (AISD), the University of Texas College of Engineering and Austin Community College, to continue to build a system combining student learning goals for solar—the goals of the Solar America Cities Program, as well as the Austin community.

The objectives of the proposed Solar America Cities Special Project are:

- Expand the number of AISD campuses from 17 to 38 that have solar photovoltaic installations by installing systems at 21 schools.

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- Continue to educate students, teachers, and community stakeholders about the benefits of clean energy using the solar installations as a tool for learning.
- Incorporate the use of the solar photovoltaic installations into the K-12 Solar Energy Curriculum.
- Revise the Solar Energy Curriculum, along with teacher training, to meet guidelines of the new 2010 Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or TEKS.
- Establish and write curriculum that includes solar energy workforce preparation for high school fourth year science courses (Engineering and Research and Design) for 2010 implementation.
- Prepare AISD students for the energy workforce and develop career pathways for solar engineers and solar technician certifications.
- Leverage resources within the community—the City of Austin, Austin Community College, University of Texas, Lower Colorado River Authority, and other organizations within the AISD—to meet AISD's 'environmental mission' of utilizing a systemic approach to inspire students to become stewards of the environment.

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