

International Award to Pioneering French Solar Municipality

13 October 2014, Beijing. The International Energy Agency Solar Heating Programme (IEA SHC) presented its 2014 SHC SOLAR AWARD to the City of Montmélian, now officially called *Montmélian la Solaire*, which has been a solar thermal pioneer for more than 30 years. The Mayor, Mrs. Béatrice Santais, received the award on behalf of city at the International Conference on Solar Heating and Cooling for Buildings and Industry in Beijing, China.

“This year’s SHC Solar Award recognizes a municipality with an incredible track record of leading by example,” said Ken Guthrie, chairman of the IEA SHC. “The city of Montmélian la Solaire has demonstrated for 30 years how to motivate a community and stimulate the development of solar thermal energy through the systematic installation of solar thermal systems in municipal and residential buildings.”

The SHC SOLAR AWARD is given to an individual, company, or private/public institution that has shown outstanding leadership or achievements in the field of solar heating and cooling, and that supports the work of the IEA Solar Heating and Cooling Programme. With the 2014 award, the IEA SHC recognizes not only the excellent results of Montmélian la Solaire, but also the pioneering spirit of the city’s leaders.

This town of 4,000 residents is firmly committed to the promotion and development of solar thermal. Nearly 1,500 m² of solar thermal collectors are installed on buildings. Of this solar collector area, 56% are installed on municipality buildings and 44% on private buildings (multifamily houses specifically). And, a solar thermal feasibility study is executed for each new communal building project.

The city of Montmélian la Solaire has always been in the forefront of the application of new solar technologies:

- solar heating for the city’s swimming pool was installed in 1984,
- large-scale solar heating for the hospital was completed in 1991,
- solar air heating (SolarWall) for the Inter-district gym hall was installed in 2007, and
- the ambitious solar city quarter, Triangle Sud, which in 2018 will be the first solar district heating system in France with a solar fraction of 80%!

Currently, the town boasts some 370 m² of thermal solar panels per 1,000 inhabitants, which is ten times more than the national average. As Mrs. Santais states, “We must continue tirelessly because we are on the right path, the one and only path.”

Behind these figures, is a particular educational approach to solar energy organized by the city. Information panels explain the operation of a solar thermal installation

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and the advantages that it brings. An electronic display shows the power generated in real-time. School activities help children understand the value of renewable energy and provide an opportunity to explain the city policy on this issue. The objective of the municipal politics is to position the city at the heart of collective awareness on environmental issues.

Further information:

- Montmélian la Solaire: www.montmelian.com
- For photos of the award ceremony, please contact communications@iea-shc.org

About the International Energy Agency's Solar Heating and Cooling Programme (IEA SHC):

- The Programme was established in 1977.
- Its objectives are co-operative research, development, demonstration and exchange of information regarding solar heating and cooling systems.
- 26 countries/organizations are IEA SHC members.
- The research topics of the current 10 projects range from general topics, such as "Solar Resource Assessment and Forecasting" and system and materials research, such as "Large Solar Thermal Systems" and "Polymeric Materials for Solar Thermal Applications" to market support topics, such as "Solar Rating and Certification".
- Additional information: www.iea-shc.org

Contact information:

- IEA SHC Information Center: communications@iea-shc.org