



## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Knox County Detention Facility to Start Gathering Sunshine**

*- New solar farm, one of the nation's largest, expected to save \$60,000  
in annual natural gas costs -*

**Knoxville, Tenn., July 13, 2010** — A new solar farm will soon enable Knox County officials to harvest sunshine to meet the hot water demands at the county's 1,036-bed detention facility. Officials anticipate that the new solar thermal system, one of the nation's largest for domestic hot water according to FLS Energy — the solar company with which Trane worked on the project — will save \$60,000 a year in natural gas expenses and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 174 tons annually.

A ceremony will be held to formally launch the solar thermal installation on **Thursday, July 15 at 11 a.m.** on the lawn outside the Knox County Detention Facility, 5109 Maloneyville Road, Knoxville, TN 37918.

The solar hot water installation features 300 solar collectors and produces and stores nearly 14,000 gallons of hot water a day for domestic use. Funding for the \$1.88 million solar farm was provided through the US Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program.

"The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program is an important part of Gov. Phil Bredesen's strategy to invest in cost-effective clean energy resources in Tennessee," said Commissioner Matt Kisber of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. "The EECBG grants will help Knox County to lead by example in their energy conservation efforts, while reducing energy bills in the short term and supporting Tennessee's rapidly growing clean energy economy in the long term."

"The solar farm is an important step forward both fiscally and environmentally," said Mayor Mike Ragsdale. "From the cost-savings, we can provide services to our citizens with money we were using to pay energy bills. Environmentally, we are following the advice of our own Knox County Green Team and tapping into alternative energy sources. In this case, that resource is sunshine, which is readily available here in the south."

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### **County-wide Improvements Currently Underway**

The solar thermal system installation is part of \$16.2 million in improvements that the county launched in collaboration with Trane in August 2009 to address aging infrastructure and high energy and operating costs. The improvements will be completed in January 2011. The county is combining anticipated energy and operational savings with \$2.1 million in U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds to pay for the improvements.

When completed, the improvements will reduce the county's energy costs an estimated 36 percent by upgrading and enhancing infrastructure in 40 facilities, 24 parks and 37 traffic intersections. In addition to creating one of the nation's largest solar farms, the improvements are also expected to add county jobs and significantly reduce the county's environmental impact while providing a more productive and comfortable environment for county employees and residents who use county services.

Over the 15-year life of the program as it was approved by the Knox County commission, the county will save an estimated \$29 million, more than covering the program's \$27 million cost. This total cost includes \$16.2 million in infrastructure upgrades, \$7.5 million in maintenance and repair services, and allotments for debt service and measurement and verification services. The resulting project requires no new tax dollars.

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### **About Knox County**

Knox County is an East Tennessee community with more than 425,000 citizens. The county is located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, and is home to the University of Tennessee, the Tennessee Valley Authority and Scripps Television Networks. Also located nearby is Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The county's public school system serves more than 55,000 students in 87 schools. Both the public library and public health systems are rated among the state's highest. The county's six senior centers provide services to the county's 70,000 residents over the age of 60. The county's parks and recreation department maintains more than 5,700 acres of park space and nearly 90 miles of greenway and walking trails. Local law enforcement officials daily ensure the safety of the county's citizens, located across the county's 526 square miles.

### **About Trane**

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**Reporters may contact:** Joan Schimml, (651) 407-3897, [joan.schimml@trane.com](mailto:joan.schimml@trane.com).