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MONROE ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS FORM GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR HAITI AND THE EARTH

MONROE, Mich. – With funding grants in hand, a group of Monroe innovators is initiating a local project with a global focus.

The River Raisin Institute (RRI), Best Electrical of Monroe, and Monroe County Community College (MCCC) are working “hand-in-hand” with the people of Haiti to increase educational opportunities and promote sustainable development in peasant communities.

The UNIF Energy and Technology Project is a collaborative effort among several local and international partner organizations. The project is designed to strengthen Haiti’s first rural university, the University of Fondwa (UNIF).

The project’s focus is installing a solar energy and computer lab at the University of Fondwa, as part of a training workshop in solar energy and information technology. Last June, RRI and MCCC faculty and staff traveled to Haiti where they co-facilitated project planning with Peasant Association of Fondwa and the university. Twenty-six individuals from four organizations from the Fondwa region of Haiti participated in planning.

This January, faculty and electricity technology students from MCCC, with help from Best Electrical staff, will assemble and test the solar energy system. As part of the project MCCC students will receive an orientation to daily life in Haiti and the community of Fondwa.

MCCC students will meet with students of University of Fondwa via video conferencing as a way of promoting cross-cultural exchange and broadening students perspective of the world and how we are all connected.

Once assembled and tested, the solar equipment will be moved to Rays of Hope for Haiti, a non-profit organization based in Grand Rapids, Mich. Rays of Hope for Haiti regularly ships equipment and supplies to Haiti. The Solar Energy Training and Installation Workshop is scheduled for April 27 – May 6.

The River Raisin Institute is a Monroe-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting transformational education and sustainable community for the 21st century and beyond.

For more information, contact **Michael Neumann**, executive director of RRI, at 734-240-9837 or visit www.rriearth.org.