



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Solar power system now operational at Midwest Groundcovers**

(January 10, 2012) – Midwest Groundcovers’ 90-acre nursery in St. Charles, IL now utilizes 37.5 kilowatts (kW) of solar energy.

Realty, LLC, an alternative energy service supplier in Illinois, owns the solar photovoltaic (PV) system now installed at Midwest’s headquarters. As part of Realty’s commitment to generating local renewable energy, Realty funded the project and hand-picked Midwest Groundcovers as a test-site for the installation.

“We are excited to announce the completion of the Midwest Groundcovers solar project,” says Michael Vrtis, President of Realty. “Realty made this investment as a trial and looks forward to Illinois promoting renewable energy so we can continue to install and provide the benefits of renewable energy to businesses in Illinois.”

Renewable Energy Alternatives of Northbrook, IL installed the solar PV system on the roof of Midwest’s maintenance building. Says Renewable Energy President Bernie Schmidt of the installation: “Midwest Groundcovers’ facility is a beautiful nursery and agricultural center. We are excited to contribute to the use of solar energy for Midwest to generate electricity.”

The Midwest Groundcovers solar PV system will produce over 48, 430 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy annually and more than one million kWh over the next 25 years. This is enough energy to power approximately thirteen average U.S. homes each year. The environmental benefits associated with the system will offset nearly 900 thousand pounds of carbon dioxide over the initial 25 years of operation.

Gary Knosher, President of Midwest Groundcovers, is enthusiastic about the project. “All of our products use solar energy since we are a plant nursery,” says Knosher. “Adding the ability to generate clean solar energy to satisfy some of our annual electricity requirements is really exciting and builds on our sustainable commitment. This is why our Vice President, Stan Schumacher, initially pursued the project for us.”

Schumacher says of Midwest’s involvement in the solar panel project: “At Midwest, we have always considered ourselves responsible stewards of the environment, and the solar panel initiative naturally aligns with our company’s sustainable practices.”

Midwest Groundcovers hosted an official Turn-On Ceremony for the solar PV system on Monday, January 9. Numerous green industry leaders and community representatives attended.

Renewable Energy Alternatives installs products manufactured to conserve, save and produce clean

energy. For more information about this organization, please contact Andrew Patellaro at 847-291-7693 or visit Renewable Energy on the web at [www.renewableenergyalt.com](http://www.renewableenergyalt.com)

Realgy, LLC is an alternative energy service supplier providing natural gas and electricity to commercial and residential consumers in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Visit their website at [www.realgyenergyservices.com](http://www.realgyenergyservices.com) or contact Michael Vrtis at 860-233-2270.

Midwest Groundcovers LLC is an industry leader in the propagation, growing, and wholesale distribution of quality container nursery stock. The company operates over 300 acres of state-of-the-art nursery production facilities at five locations in St. Charles, IL, Virgil, IL, and Glenn, MI. Each year, these facilities produce millions of container grown plants including more than 100 different ground cover varieties; over 250 species of Local Eco-Type Native Plants identified as *Natural Garden Natives*<sup>™</sup>, 140 regional Midwest native species of which some are naturally occurring selections; more than 500 varieties of perennials and ornamental grasses; and over 170 varieties of deciduous shrubs, native shrubs, broadleaf evergreens, hardy shrub roses, conifers, and vines.

Midwest Groundcovers LLC garners frequent press coverage through regional media outlets and is regularly featured in major trade publications such as *The Landscape Contractor*.

Visit Midwest Groundcovers LLC on the web at [www.midwestgroundcovers.com](http://www.midwestgroundcovers.com). For more information about this project or to obtain photographs of the event, please contact Jill Bondi at 847-742-1790.

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