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Contact: Virginia Nicols, Corporate & Community Relations, EcoMotion
(949) 450-7153, vnicols@ecomotion.us

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EcoMotion Hosts Solar Expert at Second Business Roundtable
Diverse Solar Installations Worldwide Herald New Solar Era

To start off the new year, EcoMotion hosted Johnny Weiss, of Solar Energy International, at a special roundtable as part of its ongoing lecture series.

Weiss is co-founder and Executive Director of SEI, located in Carbondale, Colorado. The organization provides education and training to decision makers, technicians and users of renewable energy sources.

“In my over 20 years in the industry, we’ve never had the interest we have now,” says Weiss. “Our students come from around the world, and from all different levels – but they all want real, hands-on training because they intend to put solar to work.”

Weiss’s presentation stressed that solar is no longer experimental; prices have gone from \$50/watt to \$3.50/watt today. The panels are working. Nothing gets used up, nothing is running out, nothing ever wears out. “When people ask, ‘Should I wait until prices come down even more to install solar?’” Weiss says, “I have to respond, ‘What if you waited to get a computer?’”

He showed photos of unique solar installations using traditional panels, particularly those integrating solar as an element in the design of the building. For example, a number of large apartment houses in Germany feature solar panels as a dark “stripe” down one side, from roof to ground – not necessarily the most efficient use, but very attractive.

Other examples showed newer solar technologies: roll-out roofing strips that integrate into a seamed roof, and individual solar “sun tiles” that actually take the place of traditional roofing material. While more flexible, these thin-film technologies are less efficient and thus require more roof space.

When asked about payback, Weiss responds in terms of overall energy usage, emissions and responsibility. “Solar isn’t about payback,” he says. “It’s about value.”

Based in Irvine, CA, EcoMotion’s mission is to promote positive change for a healthy, sustainable future. To accomplish its mission, it applies *the power of positive example* and *the power of the increment* (many small actions building on other small actions) in the energy-related programs it designs and implements for organizations, cities and utilities.