



For Immediate Release

Contact:
Ron French
rfrench@solarworksinc.com
203-762-8921
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Going Green: Local Solar Provider Catches Rays for Westport Resident

Westport, CT--Every single hour, the sun provides enough clean energy to meet all of the planet's energy needs for an entire year.

Chris Cullen, of Westport, Connecticut, is taking advantage of that free energy by installing a solar electric system on the roof of his home. Provided by Solar Works, Inc., a local full-service renewable energy firm, the installation includes sixteen photovoltaic (PV) panels and a small inverter to collect the sun's energy and to convert it to electricity for use in Cullen's home. Any extra electrical energy produced by the sun that Cullen doesn't need is automatically fed back into the electric grid, earning him a credit on his electric bill.

"These solar electric panels have no moving parts," he stated, "and require virtually no maintenance. They will be producing power on my roof for generations. What better way to invest in the future?"

Carter Wilding-White, of Lee, Massachusetts, is the regional project director of Solar Works, Inc., which maintains sales offices throughout the northeast and manages the design and installation of PV systems large and small.

"We handle the entire project, from system design and securing permits through filing for rebates and utility interconnection," explains Wilding-White, who most recently designed, then supervised, the installation of hundreds of these panels atop the roof of organic yogurt maker Stoneyfield Farms in Londonderry, New Hampshire, and the JFK Middle School in Northampton, Massachusetts. Solar Works will soon begin a solar installation on the Westport Firehouse. "At this time, with the earth's increasing energy demands, finding alternative energy sources is essential. Solar Works provides practical solutions," he says of the Montpelier, Vermont-based company. "We'd be short-sighted to overlook a year's worth of free energy *any* hour of *any* day."



The 5kw system on the Cullen roof will produce about 5,700kwh per year, or about 40% of the electrical needs of the house. Over the course of 25 years, this is equivalent to planting 627 trees or avoiding 146,983 miles of driving.

“We have always been mindful of our energy usage,” Cullen said. “We’re conscientious about turning off the lights when we leave the room and have changed some regular light bulbs to the new energy efficient fluorescent ones. We even bought dual-flush toilets to conserve water,” he said standing in his yard, looking up at the smooth black panels on his south-facing roof. “But we wanted to do more. Producing some of our own power is a smart move, environmentally and financially.”

Historically, Connecticut has experienced 4%-5% annual increases in electric rates. Recently, though, current events and escalating worldwide energy demands have many utilities implementing double-digit rate increases, which last year alone amounted to an increase of nearly 30%.

Locally, the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF) offers rebates for the installation of residential PV systems. There is also a 30% federal tax credit for the cost of a residential, renewable energy system. Combining these incentives often covers about 50% of the cost of a new system. Commercially, the economic benefits can be significantly greater, not to mention the marketing impact that comes from stating that you’re a “green” company. Hence, the financially savvy are increasingly turning an eye to the sun.

Cullen’s system is grid-tied, meaning he still has access to electricity from the power company, so he has lights even on overcast days. “But even through the clouds, there is a significant energy production,” says Wilding-White. In fact, he explains, “the northeast is actually a prime solar location because the panels operate more efficiently in cooler temperatures. Plus, with the relatively high cost of electricity here, compared with elsewhere in the country, these systems can really pay off.”

Wilding-White adds, with a smile, “I love my job because I help others reduce their energy consumption every hour of every day.” And those are very powerful hours.

About Solar Works, Inc. Solar Works, Inc. is a renewable energy systems integrator and developer, providing solar electric (photovoltaic) power systems for clients throughout the northeast. Solar Works has expertise in engineering design, project management, system performance analysis, project financing and renewable energy credit programs. Solar Works, Inc. was founded in 1980 on the idea that business could be a positive force in protecting our environment and transforming our energy future. That transformation is enabled by customers



willing to invest in what they believe in, builders and architects willing to lead the way with better designs and employees who are dedicated to a better energy future. *Solar Works can be reached at 1-800-339-7804 or www.solarworksinc.com*

About the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF) CCEF was created by the Connecticut General Assembly and is administered by Connecticut Innovations, a quasi-public organization. CCEF promotes the development and commercialization of clean energy technologies, the creation of clean energy supply, and the demand for electricity from clean, renewable sources in Connecticut in order to strengthen Connecticut's economy, protect community health, improve the environment, and promote a secure energy source for the state. CCEF's funding comes from a surcharge on electric ratepayers' utility bills. For more information on CCEF, please visit www.ctcleanenergy.com