

Lighting the way: Energy commissioner adds solar solution

Contributed by Brian Shea
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Michael Lindberg of Thunder Lake Road, chair of the town's Energy Commission, has seen the light of energy's future and last week had solar panels installed on his home's roof.

"We've been talking about it for a long time. Ron and other groups really educated us," said Mr. Lindberg, indicating Ron French, president of Solar Works, Inc. and a member of the Energy Commission.

He said the change came because he wanted to do right by the environment and promote green energy. The 36 panels installed on his roof, each 210 watts, will supply 75% of the power needed for his home and take up about 500 square feet, he said. "On many days, we'll sell energy back to CL&P," said Mr. Lindberg. He said over the 25-year lifespan of the panels, which are warrantied, \$100,000 worth of energy will be produced. The panels will take out carbon emissions equivalent to 200,000 miles of driving.

"You start to see the impact a single house can have," said Mr. Lindberg.

Another reason for installing the solar panels now are the tax credits from both the state and federal government. The panels will cost \$24,000 when the tax credits are factored in, said Mr. Lindberg.

Mr. French added that the solar panels would contribute to the value of Mr. Lindberg's house. Analogizing it to improving one's kitchen or bathrooms, Mr. French said a real estate appraisal would go up because of the panels.

Mr. Lindberg estimates he will be saving \$125 per month on his electric bill through the panels. He said he was already using Energy Star products to make his home more energy efficient and at some point it was a matter of just how far he wanted to go with making his home as green as possible.

Mr. French pointed out that Mr. Lindberg's house was ideal for the solar panels because of its design.

"In order to take advantage of it, you need a roof that's generally south facing," in order to get enough sunlight to make it worthwhile, he said.

There are four or five houses in Wilton with solar panels, according to Mr. French.

"But there's a bunch more coming," he said, since architects are now "working to design this into homes."