

Parking canopies will go solar, help power offices

On a typical summer day in Scottsdale, the sun shines down on cars parked outside hundreds of air-conditioned offices.

The cars absorb all that solar radiation and are superheated when employees get in their vehicles.

Meanwhile, the electric meter spins as the air conditioner draws power to keep those offices cool.

Scottsdale businesses are changing that equation.

Clear Creek Associates, 6155 E. Indian School Road, is installing

a photovoltaic system on a parking shade structure that is designed to provide all of the electricity needs for its 10,000-square-foot building.

Plus, Green Choice Solar LLC is planning a project that would put photovoltaic panels on a carport roof at Colliers International to provide electricity for the commercial real estate office plus more shaded parking for its employees.

"Our goal is to provide all the electricity needs," said Tony Doran, Green Choice Solar president of sales and marketing.

But, in this case, the building design limits the number of solar panels that can be installed, Doran said.

Still, the system will provide 29.7 kilowatts of power for Colliers, 14080 N. Northsight Blvd.

Company to lease solar system

Green Choice Solar will own the system and provide power to Colliers under a 15-year lease.

That should save the company its operating costs, especially as utility costs rise, Doran said.

He praised Colliers for being progressive in adding a solar-technology system that will provide about 34 percent of its electricity demand.

The system also will generate power for Arizona Public Service Co. when Colliers is closed on weekends and does not need as much energy for its offices, Doran said.

Jim Keeley, founding partner of Colliers in Scottsdale, said the green inno-

vation should cut his company's annual utility costs of \$21,000, or about \$3 per square foot, and add eight covered parking spots.

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"We're out dealing with building owners all the time," Keeley said. "It makes sense for us to understand the solar technology and buy into it."

Saving costs on going green

In this case, Green Choice Solar absorbs the installation costs for the solar technology and maintains the system.

That makes it easier for businesses to go green, Doran said.

"There are so many covered parking spaces that are sitting idle right now that could be turned into small energy plants," he said.

"This is the wave of the future," Doran added. "Clean, reliable energy is something that nobody is used to."

Green Choice Solar, 15344 N. 83rd Way, operates its 13,000-square-foot office and warehouse with electricity solely from its photovoltaic panels.

The company, incorporated in May, held a solar open house Thursday to officially launch its operation.

The solar canopy planned for Colliers must be approved by the Scottsdale Design Review Board.

Panels nearly ready to go

Clear Creek Associates hopes to have its solar panels installed and operating by early January, said Lori Bartlett, officer manager.

The groundwater- and environmental-consulting firm is working with Kennedy Partners to install the system.

Clear Creek is buying the system and financing it over seven years. With tax credits and rebates, the company will pay about \$15,000 annually for the system, which matches its annual electricity bill, Bartlett said.

When it's paid for, Clear Creek will have no utility costs and could even get revenue if it sells more power to Salt River Project than it uses.

"It's also good for the environment," Bartlett said.



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