Solar Power - The Three "E" Benefits: Environmental, Economical, Educational

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There's a chance that you may have heard about it already, but there is a technology that turns energy from the sun into energy that you can consume in your building. Of course you have heard about it, solar panels have been around for decades, the only difference now is that solar systems not only make sense environmentally, but they make sense economically as well.

As energy prices increase, more and more people are turning to solar power to offset their energy costs, and why not? The sun is free! Once installed, solar panels will generate electricity for 25-30 years. Although the sun is free, the cost to buy and install a solar system, which converts the energy from the sun to consumable energy, is not. Typically, it cost approximately $8,000-$12,000 to install 1 kW of solar panels; this cost varies depending on the size and location of the building and system. Fortunately, there are several grants and incentives that are available that enable a customer to reduce that cost to $3,000-$5,000 per kW.

The first grant that makes this possible is offered by Wisconsin Focus on Energy in which they will pay for 35% of the installed cost up to $50,000. The second grant available is the WE-Energies Non Profit grant which offers to pay 50% of a project installed cost up to $100,000 (after other incentives are accounted for). As you can see, a $240,000, 30 kW system can be installed for $100,000 or 42% of the original price. In order to receive a WE Energies grant, you must be within the WE Energies service territory. There are however, several other utility grant and incentive programs available throughout Wisconsin; more information on these grants and incentives can be found at www.dsireusa.org

Depending on the building location, size of system, shading, and current energy costs, one could expect a payback period of 10-15 years. 10-15 years may seem like a long time, but the panels are typically guaranteed for 25 years and expected to last 25-30 years; giving you 10-20 years of free and clean electricity.

In addition to the environmental and economical benefits, a solar system can also prove to be a great teaching tool. Science and technology courses discuss topics like electricity and renewable energy; having an on-site solar system with a web-based monitoring system would allow students to monitor the system's production at any hour of the day, any day of the week. Not only does this give them an understanding of electricity and renewable energy, but it generates an excitement for a young generation that will be faced with energy issues in their future.

To gain a better understanding of the incentives, grants, energy production, payback periods, or to set up a consultation, contact Velcheck & Finger Roof Consulting & Service at 262-522-3690 or visit their website: www.Velcheck-Finger.com

"Dignity does not consist of possessing honors, but in deserving them."
Aristotle

"Remember, your best relationships are not built. They are rebuilt."
Joe Takash

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