



Blue Oak Energy Designs Solar Electric System for Google

PRESS RELEASE, June 18, 2007

Twelve months ago, Google's energy usage was through the roof. Now, thanks to a new solar electric system, the Company's energy is *on* the roof.

Showing the power of teamwork, solar electric system design and engineering firm Blue Oak Energy partnered with Google's solar integrator, EI Solutions to create a customized solar electric system at the Googleplex, the Company's headquarters in Mountain View, California.

More than nine thousand solar modules transformed seven building rooftops and two car parking lots into lean, green, solar power machines. The new system — one of the world's largest — now offsets approximately 30% of the campus' peak power. That translates into more than 2.5 million pounds of carbon dioxide prevented from entering the atmosphere each year.

Proving that not all solar projects are created equal, Google's massive campus was extraordinarily complex. In designing the photovoltaic (PV) system, Blue Oak Energy had to account for irregularly shaped buildings, customized parking canopies and multiple electrical interconnections. Blue Oak Energy helped EI Solutions overcome each hurdle along the way, finishing right on schedule.

The project took 12 months to design, engineer, and construct from start to finish. Commercial scale PV systems are never 'plug-and-play.' Each project presents unique challenges related to architecture, climate conditions, utility regulations, and geography, as well as city permitting and design requirements. Communication and collaboration proved to be as critical as the engineering plans themselves, according to Tobin Booth, President of Blue Oak Energy. "Google played a huge role in the success of this project," Booth said. "It helped that their values — attracting the right people to find creative solutions, and proactively working together as a team — matched the way our teams approach challenges."

Partially sponsored by the California Solar Initiative in conjunction with PG&E, the project is one of the first of its kind in a new era of collaboration between utility companies, states, and corporations. "We expect many more forward-thinking companies to follow Google's lead," Booth said. "This is an exciting time for solar electric systems. The interest and momentum just keep building."

A flurry of state and federal legislation for energy issues is currently being considered. The “Solar Opportunity and Local Access Rights Act” (SOLAR) would establish national standards for the interconnection and net metering of solar energy systems. The “Securing America's Energy Independence Act” will create targets on achieving energy independence over time and includes long-term tax incentives for solar electric production. This legislation would require all utilities to credit customers who supply excess solar power to the grid at retail electric rates.

The proposed bills would also establish renewable energy credit (REC) rules allowing the sale or trade of these credits to meet a state or federal renewable portfolio standard.

About Blue Oak Energy

Blue Oak Energy is an engineering firm for utility / commercial scale solar electric systems. The company is responsible for engineering activities on some of the largest and most prominent US based solar electric projects. Blue Oak Energy is a member of the 1% For The Planet alliance where a percentage of company's annual earnings are donated to organizations protecting our natural resources. The company is located in Davis, California. For more information, please visit www.blueoakenergy.com.

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