

Solar panels are useless if you don't conserve energy

Stewart Somerville

Alternative Power Systems, Inc.

Installing solar panels without conservation is like turning the heat on with the windows open. Creating your own power source is as much about using it wisely as it is about size.

Using Energy Star rated appliances and compact fluorescents helps. But some of the best things are upgrading your insulation and windows.

There are tax credits available for these upgrades.

Installing better windows will not only help in the winter but if you live in the desert they will help in the summer too. Common sense is your best tool when it comes to energy conservation.

Turning off lights when you are not in the room will make a difference. Unplugging or installing a plug bar to turn of consumer-electronic devices off when not in use.

Making the most of the energy we use is a great start. Opening blinds on the windows so as to make use of the sunshine. Designing a home with a south face with windows and installing a mass to absorb the heat for after the sun goes down.

This will heat the house into the night.

If we are to make a difference as a society there is going to have to be a shift in our paradigm. Instead of passing laws and creating C & R's that prohibit solar. We need to embrace solar as a way of life. Solar is not so bad

looking to have on our roofs. As a people we need to draw attention to our new solar systems. Put it out where everyone can see it. Do we hide our new SUV so no one can see it, to make sure no one knows we have it? No we park it out on the street.

In all the pictures I see on the internet solar panels look great. Any south facing roof will look better with solar rather than a blasé roofing material.

Solar is the one thing that will put money in our pockets every month, can't say that about that new rock garden or new entry you just put in. After all we like a blue sky why not a blue roof. The farmer does not think manure is bad. As one farmer said "it's the smell of money." My roof being blue is not bad, "it's the look of money."

What if the movie stars did it or the sports heroes installed solar on the front of their houses? Would it change our opinion of how solar looks on our own houses. Why is it that so many subdivisions literally outlaw solar.

Make it so tough that most will not install solar on their roofs. Sure we don't want a kitschy installation. But one well thought out will look noble and worthy of the house it is installed on.

There are integrated products on the market today that are not intrusive and look very nice. They are integrated into the roof line and look quit eloquent. Soon these panels will come in several colors making them nearly invisible on the roof.

Call Alternative Power Systems, Inc. for a site assessment and availability of integrated solar products. The future is here we need to make the best of it.

Little known fact: Solar panels give off roughly 95 percent more energy than it does to produce. Now that's a good investment of energy. The efficiency of panels will only get better over time. When the first panels were produced they were only 6 percent efficient. Now they are over 20 percent. When panels get to be 40 percent efficient the amount of space on a roof will be less than

Saturday, December 15, 2007 — The Spectrum & Daily News — 19

POWER

• Continued from page 18

240 square feet for a 4 kilo-watt system.

We are faced with a different world, one that will demand change. We can change with it or it will be forever bruising our heads.

We have an opportunity to make a difference as a society whether we ignore it and stay business as usual is up to the individual.

One voice can change the whole world.

Stewart Somerville can be found at Alternative Power Systems, Inc. located at 1038 West Industrial Road in Cedar City.