

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW JERSEY CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM™

On a Mission to Reduce Emissions

Before Ed Dreby switched to solar electric power, he had already reduced his monthly PSE&G bill to about \$20 by making his home extremely energy efficient. Then he installed his 1.9 kilowatt (kW) photovoltaic system, which he estimated would provide 95% of his annual electric usage. Since his system began operating, he is on target to meet that goal; his bill is remarkably low – about 50 cents a month! In fact, during the summer months (June, July, and August), Dreby has sold more power than he has used to PSE&G through the New Jersey net metering program.

Dreby also took advantage of the New Jersey Clean Energy Program™ incentive, which paid nearly 60% of his installation, and he installed it himself, with a little help from his friends. Yet while Dreby's decision to go solar resulted in a near \$0 electric bill, his motives are based primarily on his concern for the environment.

"My wife, Margaret, and I wanted to convert to solar electric power, because we know that humanity is faced with the challenge of reducing carbon emissions by 60% to 80% in order to restabilize the climate," said Dreby. "We are two people concerned that we do the best that we can to function in a responsible way to help rather than hurt the earth."



Photograph courtesy of PSE&G.

Keeping the Faith

Dreby may be a do-it-yourselfer, but he has plenty of support from like-minded groups, such as Partners for Environmental Quality, Inc. (PEQ). This interfaith coalition works with different congregations throughout the Garden State in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Covenant of Sustainability. PEQ's work builds upon a common bond shared by many religious and scientific groups.

"Stewardship of the earth's resources is a unifying message for all denominations," said Nathalie Shapiro, Director of Programs, PEQ. "One of the things that every world religion is committed to is preserving the earth for generations to follow."

To learn more about the New Jersey Clean Energy Program, visit: www.njcep.com



Photograph courtesy of PSE&G.

The 1.9 kW AC solar electric system in Ed Dreby's home produces about 2,888 kilowatt-hours per year, which avoids approximately 5,400 lbs. of CO₂ emissions – an amount equivalent to the CO₂ absorbed by one acre of trees in one year. To calculate the energy production and emission reduction your home could experience using a solar electric power system, go to the Clean Power Estimator at www.njcep.com.



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Dreby, a former history teacher in Friends (Quaker) schools, makes presentations to religious groups in Pennsylvania to help spread the word about climate change and energy conservation for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, a message that matches PEQ's effort in New Jersey. In fact, a program called PEQ & ENERGY STAR® for Congregations helps faith groups to take steps simply and inexpensively to safeguard the earth.

"Unlike secular groups, we can combine spirituality with practicality in our message, but we can also back it up with hard numbers and scientific facts," said Shapiro. She has firsthand knowledge of Dreby's system, because she was there handing him the panels as he installed them on his roof.

In the summer of 2001, when Dreby first started planning his solar electric system, photovoltaic panels were in scarce supply, and most manufacturers and distributors were shipping any modules they had to California. Solar electric modules were back-ordered, and prices were not going down because of high demand and short supply. (Since then, solar equipment is readily available, and prices are coming down.) Unwilling to give up, Dreby made a connection through his church work with EcoTech in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, whose solar contractor was able to sell Dreby his panels and accessories at a substantial discount.

Earth Stewardship

Dreby believes wholeheartedly in earth stewardship. He uses a wood-burning stove. He utilizes a "hotbox" of his own design to help heat his home. He drives a three-cylinder car (seldom more than 55 miles per hour to save gas). And, of course, he draws energy from the 48-panel solar electric system atop his roof, which was the first residential solar electric installation in Burlington County.

Yet, as an active proponent of earth stewardship, Dreby does not stay put in his energy-efficient home. In addition to teaching about climate change and energy conservation to adult classes in churches and synagogues throughout New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, Dreby is actively involved nationally with adult education and public policy advocacy for ecological sustainability through the Society of Friends (Quakers).

"The earth is not for humans to mess up," said Dreby. "I don't try to tell people what to do with their lives, but if large numbers of people did a few little things to improve energy consumption, it would make a huge difference."



Photograph courtesy of PSE&G.



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