

Installing Solar Panels To Reduce Energy Costs

Hidden Creek Golf Club
Clark Weld, superintendent

Egg Harbor Township, N.J. 08234

Issue

The cost of energy was increasing at Hidden Creek Golf Club. Annual energy consumption costs had risen to approximately \$130,000 for 630,000 kilowatt-hours and the local utility company could increase these charges without notice. In 2010, David Goddard, president and CEO of Ole Hansen and Sons, Inc., saw an opportunity to benefit the club and the environment by installing solar panels. Solar panels would reduce energy costs and the installation price could be partially offset with federal grant opportunities and by selling the Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SREC) that would come with the project. Hidden Creek decided to move forward with the solar panel installation project in 2010.

Action

After reviewing proposals from several electrical contractors, Hidden Creek selected a contractor with previous solar panel installation experience that could help navigate the technical permitting and approval process. An experienced contractor was also helpful in negotiating a contract for selling the SRECs to the local utility company.



Hidden Creek Golf Club placed solar panel arrays in one of their property's water retention basins to maximize available land and avoid any interference with the golf course.

The solar arrays were installed in the property's stormwater retention basin and mounted on roofs, combining to generate a total of 499 kilowatt-hours of power. The site chosen for the panels is an area that maximized available land, is secluded from the golf course and does not interfere with play. Construction costs were offset by a 30-percent federal grant and additional revenue from a fixed-price, 10-year sales contract of SRECs.

Results

Since the solar panel installation, Hidden Creek reduced electrical expenses by 77 percent at their maintenance facility and 28 percent at their pump station. Because of the SREC and reduction in power consumption, the system paid for itself within six years. The club, and Superintendent Clark Weld, are happy with the financial savings and take pride in reducing their carbon footprint. Hidden Creek Golf Club took full advantage of federal grants and SREC sales to help offset the cost of the project. Currently, federal and state benefits make it difficult to justify similar solar energy projects, but partnering with experts who understand federal and state rebates and incentives can help you decide if renewable solar energy is a good fit for your club.