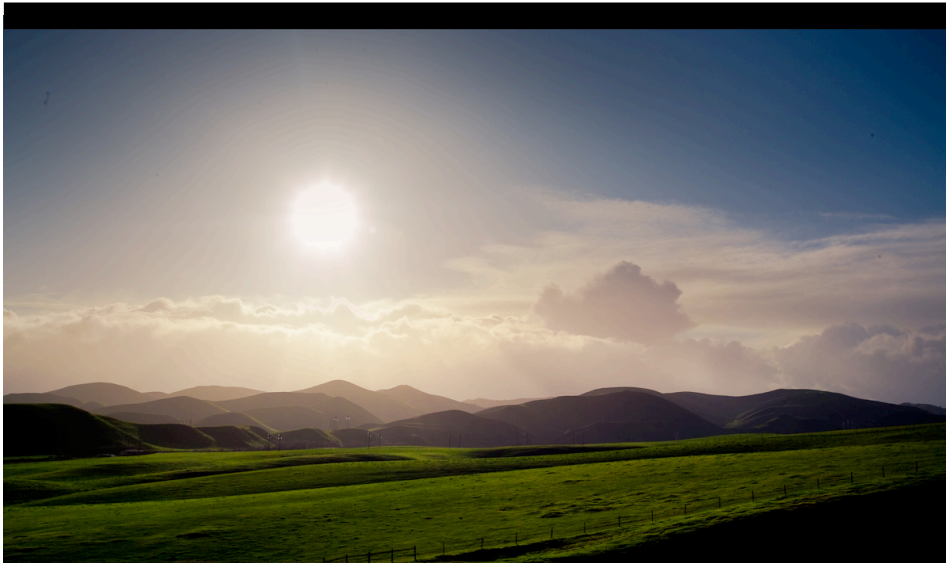


Sutter County, Calif., HA Gets \$500K Grant for Solar Farm



Source: [lyzadanger](#) (Creative Commons License)

The Consolidated Area Housing Authority of Sutter County, Calif., has received a \$513,024 grant to install a solar farm. The grant is part of the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Multi-Family Affordable Solar Housing (MASH) program.

The energy produced by the solar farm will offset 60 percent of the energy usage of the residents of the Housing Authority's Richland Public Housing units.

Over the solar farm's 25-year life-span, it will markedly reduce the Housing Authority's carbon footprint.

Located on a two-acre parcel of land, the solar farm will produce 60 percent of the amount of energy that Richland's units normally consume. The farm will produce energy that flows to PG&E's grid. The amount of energy flowing back to the grid will be kept track of by a virtual net metering system. (No actual energy will be sent from the farm to the units themselves.)

In return, PG&E will offset the electrical bills for these units by 60 percent. Residents will purchase 60 percent of their energy from the Housing Authority and the remainder from PG&E. The funds received by the Housing Authority for the residents' energy purchase will be used to maintain the system itself and make improvements to the public housing units.

The Housing Authority will purchase all the energy produced by the farm at \$0.04 per kilowatt.

The Housing Authority has partnered with San Francisco Bay Area-based EcoPlexus/Fresh Air

Energy LLC to install and maintain the solar farm for the first six years. After the sixth year, the Housing Authority will purchase the solar farm from EcoPlexus.

The Housing Authority first learned of the MASH grant program at a Housing California Annual Conference. The partnership came about because the Housing Authority had been looking for opportunities to modernize and "green up" its housing stock, says Housing Authority development and rehabilitation administrator Gustavo Becerra.

Initially, the plan was to have solar panels on the roofs of the Richland units. But in its initial studies, EcoPlexus found the roofs would be unsuitable because of shade. Now, the solar panel farm is proposed to be located in a vacant area at the rear of the units.

"We own some land right behind of these units that is right now being used for compost, mulch, and landscaping," says Becerra. "No shade problems there."

The Housing Authority also has requested some additional funding from the Yuba City Redevelopment Agency and is awaiting their decision.

This will be the first solar farm in Sutter County for either market-rate or affordable apartment complexes. "We believe we're on the cutting edge to do this first type of project in our area," says Becerra. "We're quite excited."

The Housing Authority plans to have the solar farm up and running by February.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Five-Day Intensive EPC Course

▶ June 14 - 18, 2010 | Chicago, IL
 Contact: Eugene Goldfarb
 312-554-0900 or egoldf1@uic.edu

IAQVEC 2010

▶ August 15-18, 2010 | Syracuse, NY
 ☞ www.tinyurl.com/ydglrk9

Energy and Environmental Building Alliance

▶ October 12-14, 2010 | Portland, OR
 ☞ www.eeba.org

Enviro Build Expo

▶ October 13 - 14, 2010 | Hartford, CT
 ☞ www.envirobuildexpo.com

A Legacy of Katrina: Green Homes

In New Orleans, hundreds of sustainable, energy-efficient homes are being built in lower-income neighborhoods, a trend that's outpacing most of the rest of the country. More than 500 homes are being built with features such as solar panels, rain-catching cisterns and eco-friendly materials in neighborhoods that received the brunt of the damage from the 2005 floods following Hurricane Katrina. Hundreds of other homes are being given green upgrades.

Green building has traditionally been left to higher-end homes, whose owners can afford the costlier solar panels and other elements, says Forest Bradley-Wright of the New Orleans-based Alliance for Affordable Energy. But as New Orleans began to rebuild, non-profits stepped in with innovative development techniques and eco-friendly plans to rebuild lower-income neighborhoods such as the Lower 9th Ward and Pontchartrain Park, he says. Source: [USA Today](#)

Co. Uses \$17M in ARRA Funds to Rehabilitate PH

Colorado housing authorities made good on a promise to put people back to work with Recovery Act funds for public housing improvements, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said. HUD announced that \$17 million had been allocated toward the rehabilitation of 925 homes and the creation of nearly 60 jobs in Colorado by the critical March 17 deadline.

The deadline was written into the Recovery Act to make sure Americans were put back to work as soon as possible. Many of the projects emphasize green housing and building, said Rick Garcia, the local HUD regional director. One of the

CONT from P1 participants is Boulder Housing Partners, which received nearly \$627,300 in Recovery Act capital funds. It has completed solar installations in two of its public-housing units and hired local solar-energy companies to do the work. *Source:* [The Denver Post](#)

10 Green Building Trends for 2010

The Earth Advantage Institute has released a list of the top ten green building trends in 2010. The trends include home energy "scores" and real-time energy-use tracking on the internet. The institute reports that utilities continue to upgrade the grid for more effective power generation, storage and distribution, and that "the smart grid and connected home is expected to grow in 2010."

Among the institute's predictions are energy labeling for homes and office buildings. The non-profit says this will make it easier to perform a building-to-building or home-to-home comparison, but a publicly available score on the multiple listing service could push building owners to make needed energy improvements. *Source:* [The Environmental Leader](#)

Bay Area Cities Snag \$3M for Green Affordable Housing

California awarded a \$3 million grant to make affordable housing developments more energy efficient in Bay Area cities. The grant goes to a partnership of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing, Enterprise Community Partners Inc. and the Low Income Investment Fund, which have created the Affordable Multifamily Retrofit Initiative.

The initiative involves a loan program aimed at retrofitting 1,300 apartments in Bay Area cities, including San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland.

Source: [The San Francisco Business Times](#)

Green Incentive Added for Multifamily Housing in Texas

El Paso, Tx., has added another incentive for multifamily development, offering a bonus to builders who meet specific green building benchmarks. Multifamily Green Building Grant awards will now be given to all developers that construct new multifamily units in El Paso that meet the American National Standards Institute National Green Buildings Standard of bronze or higher.

Source: [The El Paso Times](#)

USGBC, Sierra Club Partner for 'Cool Cities'

In Charlotte, N.C., environmentalists and green-building advocates announced a national partnership with a tour of North Carolina's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified multifamily housing project for low-income tenants. Local volunteers of the Sierra Club and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), which sponsors the LEED certification program, will work together to promote environmentally friendly buildings, initially focusing on affordable housing.

The tours are part of the national "Green Buildings for Cool Cities," a partnership between the Sierra Club and USGBC. The project is aimed at helping cities nationwide make green buildings and communities a key component of their economic and environmental recovery efforts.

Source: [The Charlotte \(NC\) Observer](#), [USGBC](#)

How to Keep a Green Building from Turning Brown

1. Educate the occupants and maintenance staff (including the families living in green homes) about how to keep the building green. That doesn't mean giving them a thick manual they will never read. Consider providing hands-on training to homeowners and maintenance staffs, including one-on-one sessions and DVDs.
2. Monitor and assess the building's performance. We must continually think about how it's being used and what may have changed. The building should be assessed periodically to ensure it is still operating the way it did when the plaque was hung. Only then will the data be meaningful; otherwise the performance will never live up to the promises.
3. Collect and analyze information about the performance of these buildings to demonstrate in a statistically significant way that these green upgrades really do pay for themselves economically, socially and environmentally.

We want to hear from you! Please send us nominations for projects to be highlighted in EcoWise.

Contact us at ecowise@deval.us

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Green Affordable Housing 'Form of Social Justice' in L.A.



Image Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

[Casa Dominguez](#) is a new \$31 million affordable housing project built in Compton, Calif., by [Adobe Communities](#). The 70-unit development aims to be the first multifamily affordable housing project in Los Angeles County to win the LEED platinum certification, the USGBC's highest LEED rating.

Adobe President Robin Hughes called this kind of green affordable housing a form of social justice. "Sustainability practices should be something we embrace no matter what income level we are at," she said.

Source: [The Los Angeles Times](#)

Resident's Corner Make a Green Resolution This Year

Saving Energy in Apartments

Even if you're not getting your energy from the sun, you can still save energy with these tips:

Use the heat of the sun to your advantage

During the winter, open south-facing curtains to allow the sun to warm your rooms during the day. Be sure to close curtains at night to prevent heat loss. You might also consider making insulated shutters for winter nights.

In the summer, close your curtains during the day to prevent the sun from overheating your apartment.

Save money on lighting and other electronics

Compact fluorescent light bulbs provide more light for less money. While these bulbs cost between \$5 and \$10 each, they save from \$30 to \$60 in electricity over their life. They should last around 10,000 hours, versus less than 1,000 for a standard incandescent bulb.

Compact fluorescent bulbs are best suited for lights that are on at least four hours each day.

Kill 'vampire' appliances

Did you know that newer electric appliances and equipment can still draw electricity when turned off? Consider putting your television, VCR, DVD player, and radio on a power strip that can be turned off with a flick of the switch.

Computers, printers, and associated equipment should be on their own power strip that is switched off when this equipment is not in use.

Source: [Household Energy Savings: What Renters Can Do](#). Athens, GA: [The University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension](#).