

Ann Arbor Farmers Market invests in solar collectors

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Alan Warren | The Ann Arbor News photo - Doug Carnahan, Ron Contesso, and Ray St. Aubin of RCI Roofing and Sheet Metal of Brighton install photovoltaic laminates on the roof of the Farmers Market in Kerrytown in Ann Arbor on Monday.

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There's not much shade at the [Ann Arbor Farmers Market](#).

As workers began a project to install solar collectors on the market's roof under sunny skies Monday morning, it was easy to see why they might be a good investment.

"This is kind of nice because it's facing south," said John Wakeman, owner of [S.U.R. Energy](#) of Ann Arbor, the company providing the solar materials.

The 156 solar collectors will generate about \$1,500 worth of electricity per year to be used by the market offices. The solar power also can supply the electrical needs of the vendors who set up their stalls at the market.

The project is one step toward a city goal of having municipal operations running on 30 percent renewable energy by 2010, and about 20 percent of the entire community on renewable energy by 2015.

"It's a good place to show off the technology a little bit," said Mayor John Hieftje. "Part of the project is not just to power city government but to educate our residents about what can be done."

Hieftje said similar solar collectors may be placed on other municipal structures as the city takes advantage of \$200,000 from the [U.S. Department of Energy](#). The

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money was given to promote solar energy in the community.

Because of its commitment to solar energy, Ann Arbor was named a Solar America City - one of 25 in the country. Steve Palmeri, solar project manager at the energy department, recognized the city at a ceremony at the Farmers Market on Monday. A sign with the designation was posted in the parking lot.

Palmeri said the agency chose a variety of cities that represent different geographical locations and can serve as models for other cities to follow.

The **Downtown Development Authority** provided \$100,000 for the project at the Farmers Market, said David Konkle, the city's energy coordinator.

Workers are removing the old roof over the stalls and replacing it with a roof covered with photovoltaic laminates. Like a giant bumper sticker, the solar material has an adhesive on one side and was applied to the roof material before arriving at the market.

The solar collectors should be up and running by July.