

SolarNovar off to hot start

By **DAN HEATH**
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PLATTSBURGH — A local company is shining bright as the sun.

SolarNovar, started by Linda and Greg Brienza of Triangle Electrical Systems, held an open house this week to tout the benefits of solar power and its new tracker systems.

Three large, 30-panel arrays are in operation on the company grounds. Everything except the solar panels and power inverters are built on-site.

FOLLOW THE SUN

SolarNovar Director of Business Development Roger Sorrell said the dual-axis trackers allow the solar-panel arrays to follow the sun for optimum reception.

"By having panels track the sun, you can be sure that when the sun does come out, have your 'solar sails' up and ready," SolarNovar President Greg Brienza said.

"On cloudy days, even though it may not seem like the sun is doing much, there may be an edge of cloud effect that amplifies and concentrates the available solar energy."

IN USE

The open house included a tour and testimonials from clients.

Plattsburgh City Clerk Keith Herkalo said Triangle installed a 5.5-KW array on property where he's renovating a small bungalow.

"It will run the house and does today," he said.

Plattsburgh State Professor Dr. Nancy Church said Triangle installed panels on the roof of the garage at her new home in Chazy. The system has allowed her to save the energy equivalent to 6,000 pounds of carbon.

"We're feeling very good to be energy conscious and save money too," she said.

State Sen. Betty Little, State Assemblywoman Janet Duprey and a representative of Gov. David Paterson's office attended. Mr. Brienza said he hoped they would take a message back to Albany that "SolarNovar is ready to help the state and its residents produce clean solar-energy solutions and green manufacturing jobs."

STATE GOALS

On Wednesday, Tom Congdon, deputy secretary for energy with Gov. David Paterson's office, discussed aspects of state assistance.

He noted the governor's 2009 State of the State address included a commitment to clean energy, with goals of a 15-percent improvement in electrical energy efficiency and a 30-percent increase in renewable energy.

The customer-sided tier of that program is what helps companies like SolarNovar, he said.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority provides fixed incentives that certified installers can use to help market their products.

Those incentives can typically pay for about 40 to 50 percent of a system. That can make quite a difference, as a large tracker system to power two houses can cost about \$86,000, Sorrell said.

After the event, Duprey said green power continues to be increasingly important and that solar power is a way to bring it to the individual homeowner.

"Many of us in the North Country have good spots to locate these. I had no idea of how many varieties there were until I took the tour today."

Little said she was impressed with the employees' enthusiasm during the tour.

"There is so much energy in this company. I know they'll be successful. These are local jobs, green jobs. It is people from this area who are putting in this effort."

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Photos



From left, electrician Kevin Nephew, engineer Anthony Sansone, Steve Hunt and Janet Duprey discuss a solar panel at SolarNovar that keeps track of the sun, moving throughout the day. Staff Photo



Greg Brienza Staff Photo



Linda Brienza Staff Photo