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SOLAR GARDEN

Some label it a solar garden, as community solar, or a solar farm, nonetheless the name alone conjures up a perception of intrigue. What exactly constitutes a garden of solar? Well, in simplistic terms, it's a solar array where the individual solar panels are leased to subscribers. In the setting of an array erected by an electrical cooperative, the

member subscriber would receive a credit on their bill for all generation associated with their leased panel. A typical panel could potentially produce 20–40 kWhs a month, depending on the size of the panel to be purchased, the location of the array, the weather, and the time of year. When the average monthly usage for a Price Electric Cooperative seasonal member is 225 kWhs, and a residential member is 775 kWhs, you can see how a panel could help subsidize a monthly electric bill. One ought to consider that energy rates tend to increase on an average of 2% annually, and the expense of the panel stays the same. It's the recovery of your initial investment that's evaluated when undertaking this type of endeavor.

Subsidizing your electric bill with an energy credit is only one of the benefits to leasing a panel with a one-time modest investment. If you didn't have a good location on your property to install your own solar array, this might be an alternative motive, or you may have too many trees conflicting

with the operation of an adequate array. The initial cost for installing a complete solar array at your home may well be more than you wish to bear, which before incentives, could be \$14K–\$19K, for a 5KW unit. If you live in an apartment duplex, or rent your home from someone else, you would have another reason for leasing a panel. Nevertheless, three of the most common rationales for leasing a panel are to support clean energy (emission-free), to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and also to reduce dependence on foreign countries. On the line side of the meter, there are benefits as well; one of those is to reduce the system demand during summer peaks when the cost of energy is higher, and the solar generation is at its zenith.

The concept of solar gardens at electric cooperatives is relatively universal, and thus, if you drove by our neighboring cooperatives, Taylor, Barron, or Bayfield, you would see solar gardens at their headquarters offices.

Now, let me ask the question, “Does a solar garden project at your cooperative sound appealing?” If so, please let us know. If not, please say so. The first step of the process is to gauge interest, and if there is interest, how much is there? Please answer the questions below or online and tell us what you think.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read and respond to a potential offering that allows those interested with an opportunity, within our continuing effort in exploration, for the potential betterment of your member-owned cooperative.

“We have this handy fusion reactor in the sky called the sun, you don't have to do anything, it just works. It shows up every day.”

– Elon Musk

PEC Membership Solar Interest Survey

1. Do you think Price Electric should erect a solar garden? Yes No
2. Would you lease (for the life of the panel) a panel for a one-time cost of \$600–\$1,000? Yes No
3. How many panels would you lease in this solar garden? 0 1 2 3+
4. Would you be interested in installing solar at your residence? Yes No
5. If you answered “yes” to #4, what is your reason for considering a solar array at your home?

6. Enter the drawing for a \$25 bill credit for completing this survey (optional if you prefer to remain anonymous).

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Account Number: _____

A winner will be drawn from all responses on September 30

You may also take the survey online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NG3Q9WD>.

The Puzzler will return in October. The winner of the July PEC Puzzler was Diana Ciskon. Congratulations!