

Fort Collins' solar capacity has tripled in last year



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Fort Collins' solar capacity has nearly tripled in the last year, due in part to a new program that allows businesses to install solar power systems on their buildings and give the power to the city.

The city's solar capacity now sits at a sunny 7 megawatts, up about 1,000 percent from its 2010 capacity. Overall, solar still only accounts for about 1 percent of Fort Collins' energy production.

The increase is thanks to the Solar Power Purchase Program approved by city council in 2013. Ten participants have installed 3.7 megawatts worth of solar systems on their buildings, producing solar energy that goes directly to the electric grid for general use. The participants are paid based on a 20-year agreement.

The three largest participants are a private landowner who installed .97 megawatts; Intel, which installed about 1 megawatt on its building's carport; and Colorado State University, which installed about 1.2 megawatts total on six buildings throughout campus, including the student recreation center and the concert hall.

The city plans to double or triple its solar capacity in the next five to 10 years, Fort Collins energy services engineer Norm Weaver said at a CSU panel discussion Thursday night.

The Solar Power Purchase Program is the first program of its kind in Colorado. It's a piece of the city's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent of 2005 levels by 2020 and become carbon neutral by 2050.

Program participants:

Colorado State University- Parmelee Hall, Student Recreation Center, Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Edwards Hall, Braiden Hall, Concert Hall (all owned by Solaris Energy, developed by Namaste Solar): 1,202 kilowatts

Intel Carport (developed by Solar City): 997 kilowatts

Private landowner (owned by SolSystems and Washington Gas, developed by Bella Energy and Oak Leaf Energy): 971 kilowatts

Woodward (developed by Douglas Colony): 125 kilowatts

Colorado State University's Braiden Hall (owned by Solaris Energy, developed by Namaste Solar): 99 kilowatts

New Belgium Brewery (developed by Namaste Solar): 99 kilowatts

Scotch Pines Village (developed by Bella Energy): 96 kilowatts

RCD Plaza (developed by Namaste Solar): 80 kilowatts

MotherLove Herbals (developed by Bella Energy): 70 kilowatts

Fort Collins Housing Authority Redtail Ponds (developed by Bella Energy): 59

kilowatts