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In uncertain economic times, a success story is welcome news. SunDog Solar, the first incubator business to launch at Solaqua Power & Art, is a full-service solar consultation and installation company offering residential and commercial renewable energy systems and services that help consumers improve energy efficiency, reduce energy spending and increase building performance. SunDog designs and installs solar electric systems, solar hot water systems and bio spray foam insulation.

"We're creating green collar jobs, and we're hiring," says Jody Rael, President and Founder, SunDog Solar. "We're contracted through the end of the year for residential installations. Over the last five years interest in renewable energy has increased dramatically, fueling our success. Better federal and state incentive programs have also helped make solar more accessible to customers," says Rael.



"We're developing a Power Purchase Agreement for schools, municipalities and non profits," says Rael. "With a power purchase agreement there's no money down (for equipment and installation). Instead there's a locked-in payment for energy, which is a much more affordable arrangement," continues Rael.

SunDog produces its electricity from a 12.6 kW solar (pv) electrical system, and heats their 20,000 sq. ft. building with a 500K BTU waste vegetable oil boiler, using oil collected from local restaurants. Several rooftop solar thermal arrays provide hot water, exterior closed-cell soy foam insulation, double storm windows and T5 fluorescent lighting with motion switches make this building a carbon neutral, energy-efficient model for future adoption at the mill. Even the vehicles used for installations are powered by bio diesel fuel.

Profits from SunDog Solar go to Solaqua Power & Art, a center for green business and the arts powered with renewable energy. Solaqua Power & Art is a project under development in Chatham to rehabilitate the vacant Columbia Box Board Mill for reuse as a center for green businesses and the arts, powered with renewable energy technologies.

The first phase incorporates rehabilitation of over 40,000-square feet with a light manufacturing facility for green building trades and industrial arts, as well as a regional foods restaurant and brewpub. Rael and team are focused on working with local community members, politicians, nonprofit organizations, and investors to make Solaqua happen.



"Another project we're working on is to create a Solar Thermal Center," says Betsy Ferris Wyman, Executive Vice President, SunDog Solar. Wyman says the center will include demonstration models, equipment sales and distribution, installation crews, workforce development training and public education. The company has recently applied for a grant from NYSERDA to install a "solar chiller" demonstration model at their facility that will provide air conditioning using solar heat.

Plans are also underway for a community event Father's Day weekend at Crellin Park to raise awareness for renewable energy. The Summer Solstice Family Picnic & Energy Fair will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2009 from Noon - 4PM at Crellin Park, in Chatham. Rain or Shine. Admission is free. Bring a picnic lunch and a non-perishable food donation for the Regional Food Bank. Learn about renewable energy and meet community organizations devoted to sustainable, green and artistic living. Enjoy live music and meet your amazing neighbors.

For more information visit <http://www.solaqua.org/> and <http://www.sundogsolar.net/> or call 518-392-4000.

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