

Littlestown animal hospital goes solar

BY MARK WALTERS
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Sitting on a table in the front yard of the Littlestown Veterinary Hospital at 5010 Baltimore Pike in Germany Township is a laptop computer providing live statistics of 235-watt solar panels.

The animal hospital, which had 105 solar panels installed on the roof of its converted barn, is not only saving energy and money. It is able to track the precise output of each roughly 5-by 3-foot panel.

"They're obviously caring for animals and now they're caring for the environment," said Robert Taylor, the Department of Environmental Protection's small business

ombudsman for Southcentral Pennsylvania.

The American-made panels provide the equivalent of saving 550 trees every year, allowing the hospital to cut its electric bill in half, an estimated \$3,400 in annual utility savings.

The panels were provided by Astrum Solar, a multi-state installer of residential and small commercial solar panel systems headquartered in Annapolis Junction, Md.

The cost-saving is twofold, as the panels will generate \$9,000 from renewable energy credits, according to Astrum Solar marketing Vice President Michelle Waldgeir.

"With half the energy bill paid, for a small business that

could mean adding another employee," said Dr. Gary Kubala.

While the project costs "in the \$100,000s," the hospital only had to pay about one-third of that thanks to funding from state and federal grants.

"I'm very fond of alternative energy," said state Rep. Dan Moul, R-91, who attended the small presentation Thursday morning. "It's the wave of the future; to get away from the old ways and make this place better than we found it for our children and grandchildren."

Don Lindsey, co-owner of the hospital and father of one of the veterinarians, Dr. Julie Holland, shopped around for the panels. He admitted he knew nothing about solar ener-

gy.

"Different companies had different ideas and I learned something from all of them," Lindsey said, adding that Astrum Solar was the only company that had inverters in each panel, which allows for people to see what each panel is generating.

"When people come in and ask about the solar panels, we can bring this right up," Holland said, pointing to the laptop computer, which read that in a matter of just two weeks, the panels had saved the equivalent of 169 gallons of gas.

"When we don't use fossil fuels, I like it," Moul said.



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GOING SOLAR - Littlestown Veterinary Hospital on Baltimore Pike, Germany Township.