

## PWA goes Solar!

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Last winter, Pacific Watershed Associates installed an 11.34 kilowatt solar array consisting of (63) 180 watt modules at our main office in McKinleyville, CA. By the 3rd month in operation, May 2008, our system had produced 2/3 of our electricity. From April through August our business was essentially off-the-grid, producing more electricity than we used in both May and June. While we did not have a south facing roof, we did have good westerly exposure. Instead of installing 57 panels facing south, we put up 63 panels facing west, which made up for the difference caused by the less efficient westerly exposure. We purchased locally made materials, including 3 inverters from PV Power of Bend, OR and a rack system from Arcata's Solar Racks. The installation is shown in progress, and completed, in the two photos below.

Our installer Roger traveled to the job each day in his electric '65 VW Bug. All materials for the project were shipped directly to our location to reduce shipping energy. We benefited from a California Energy Commission rebate program and upon completion of the project we received a \$25K rebate. In addition PWA was able to qualify for a 30% federal tax credit of the after-rebate total. We will be able to depreciate the equipments costs over a 5 year period, the return-on-investment for the entire project is 4.5 years.

Within the first year of service, our solar array has generated approximatley 10,600 kilowatts of electricity and we've saved nearly \$2,000 in energy costs! The two graphs below show energy consumption and energy costs before (2007) and after (2008) the project, respectively. The second graph shows excess power delivered to the PG&E grid in both May and June, 2008.

In California there is a rebate program to encourage businesses and home owners to install solar systems, yet the current rebates have progressively decreased from what was offered in the past. We encourage you to contact your state energy commission to find out about rebates, and your representatives in Sacramento to extend and strengthen the solar rebate program.

For more information about incentive programs for solar systems, check out the following websites:

[www.gosolarcalifornia.org](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org) [www.energy.ca.gov](http://www.energy.ca.gov)