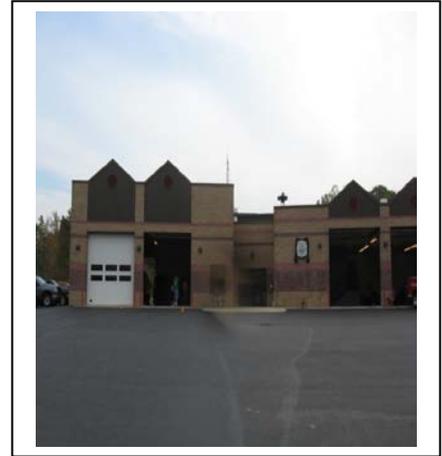


## Averill Park Fire District #2 Goes (High Tech) Green

- Installation of four ground-mounted, dual-axis solar trackers from SolarNovar's Plattsburgh, NY, facility and four SMA inverters manufactured in Denver, CO
- Local labor provided by Monolith Solar Associates and A Septic Service
- Over 42,000 kWh of renewable energy, saving \$7,800, annually

### Providing Emergency Services and Community Leadership

Founded in 1910, Averill Park's Fire District provides first response for fire and EMS services for more than 3,500 people in an area of more than 10 square miles. In addition, the firehouse has been designated as an emergency shelter by the town and FEMA in case of disaster. During the ice storm of 2008, the fire house accommodated fire personnel and residents who lost power as well as line crews from National Grid and NYSEG. Firehouse staff served more than 300 meals a day. With this ingrained sense of community leadership, the Fire District has taken advantage of the opportunity presented by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA) American Recovery and Reinvestment American (ARRA) grant program to be a leader in solar energy. The Fire District is installing a 27.6 kW dual-axis tracking solar electric system that will reduce the carbon footprint of the Fire District and save money for taxpayers.



"As firemen, our job is to provide emergency services to the community, and as such we are fully aware of needing to be on the cutting edge of technology. We understand why greening has to happen", says Fire Commissioner, Ron Berti.

### ARRA Funding Crucial to Advance New Technologies that are Produced in Upstate New York

The Fire District will receive approximately \$247,000 to cover more than 90% of the cost of this cutting edge solar electric system. Funding is provided under NYSERDA's administration of the State Energy Program funded by the Recovery Act. Ron Berti echoes the sentiments of other public entities in New York. "Eighty-four percent of our budget is mandatory spending, and there is no way you do this project without NYSERDA and ARRA."

Four ground-mounted, dual-axis solar tracking arrays will be installed on the lawn area behind the Fire House. These trackers rotate horizontally and vertically, so the panels follow the sun across the sky from sunrise to sunset. The electricity generated by this system is expected to save local taxpayers at least \$6,137 per year, an accomplishment that gives the Fire Commissioner the right to boast.

"We have not raised taxes in three years, and the budget has gotten very tight with the increase in energy costs. If we can reduce electricity costs, we can sustain ourselves despite the increase in the cost of fuels and hopefully will not have to increase taxes for the next two years," says Mr. Berti.

### Americans Working to Put Solar Energy in the Ground

Recovery Act funding requires all projects for public buildings and public works be compliant with the Buy American Act, which ensures local labor and domestic manufacturing forces get the boost they have needed since 2008. The project's installer, Steven Erby of Monolith Solar Associates, states "the funding provided under this grant has given both Monolith Solar and SolarNovar the opportunity to retain and add employees."

In late 2010, the installers were able to beat the cold weather and excavate and pour the foundation for the trackers. During the winter, the inverters will be installed in the meter room. Once the assembly of the trackers is complete at the factory, the trackers will be trucked in, and workers will use a crane to lift the four solar tracking systems into place.

These processes ensure that local labor is kept busy in the notoriously slow winter months. “We are still in the throes of the recession. Small Business is the instigator of new jobs. By going local you are priming the pump. The money goes to real people who have real problem,” adds Mr. Berti.

### **American Workers, American Expertise, American Made**

The components of this system are putting Americans to work. The four ground mounted two-axis solar trackers are assembled at SolarNovar’s Plattsburgh, NY, facility. The four SMA inverters are manufactured at SMA’s Denver, CO, facility.

Mr. Berti emphasizes the need for U.S. manufacturing capacity. “It is very important that we buy American products. This country has an amazing manufacturing capacity that is dormant. This program is providing jobs to create it and jobs to put it in the ground.” Mr. Erby adds, “for us, this is critical if we want to come out of this recession. We have to start making goods again. No longer can we support the rest of the world by consuming products that we invented and others have produced.”

### **Fire District an Example for the Community**

The solar trackers also spur development in other renewable projects in the community by demonstrating that solar energy is a practical solution for the challenges we face as a nation. Ron Berti states “we have already had inquiries from small businesses on how to emulate our project.”

“This funding has allowed projects that people will be able to see, feel, and touch, which meets a critical need for education with regard to the function and benefits of renewable energy.” adds Mr. Erby.

### **Saving Money, Saving the Environment**

The Fire District’s solar electric project does not just save local taxpayers money. By reducing electricity use, the system is reducing the U.S.’s dependence on fossil fuel and avoiding the release of 35,000 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere each year.

“It is definitely good that we are not depleting fossil fuels, and we are not polluting the sky,” says Mr. Berti. When this project is complete, the firefighters of Averill Park will not only serve as heroes to the children of the community, they will also be considered champions of the environment.”

### **Recovery Act**

The Fire District of Averill Park received this award from the [U.S. Department of Energy’s State Energy Program](#). The State Energy Program provides grants to states and directs funding to State Energy Offices from technology programs in DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. States use grants to address their energy priorities and to adopt emerging renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. SEP is distributing \$3.1 billion of funding to the states and U.S. territories under the [2009 Recovery Act](#).

