

Washington State

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Solar Power Reduces Vender Energy Costs at Olympia Farmers Market

The Farmers Market in Washington State's Capital City of Olympia attracts some 500,000 visitors during its nine-month run and generates about \$5 million in sales. As the City of Olympia's liaison to the Farmers Market, the Parks, Arts and Recreation Department was approached by Steve Wilcox, who had interest partnering with the City and the Farmers Market to produce an alternate source of energy for the Market. In 2009, legislation was passed that allows projects on local government property that are owned by limited liability companies (LLC). In the early summer of 2010, the City was approached by a group interested in creating an LLC to take advantage of this opportunity. In November of 2010, the Farmers Market Community Solar Project (FMCSPP) LLC was formed.

Steve Wilcox, Director, Farmers Market Community Solar Project LLC, applied for a Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) grant of \$20,000 to help purchase solar roof panels to be installed by Sunset Air on the Olympia Farmers Market. Borrower contribution was \$178,750. Total project cost was \$198,750.



REAP project in which USDA Rural Development awarded a \$20,000 grant to the Farmers Market Community Solar Project for solar roof panels installed on the Olympia Farmers Market roof.

From its beginnings in 1973, the Olympia market has grown into one of the biggest in the state and is a popular place to gather with friends and guests from out of town to shop, eat lunch or listen to live music performed on the covered stage. The 192 solar panels manufactured in the state were installed by Sunset Air in June 2011. The panels are capable of producing 30 percent to 50 percent of the market's electricity needs, said Wilcox, who also serves as a seafood vendor at the market. capable of producing 30 percent to 50 percent of the market's electricity needs, said Steve Wilcox, a seafood vendor at the market and managing member of the Farmers Market Community Solar Project LLC. The solar panels produce energy which will reduce the electrical costs of the individual vendors.

When the market is not in operation, the market will be credited on its Puget Sound Energy power bill for the kilowatts generated. Investors in the LLC are also eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit on their contribution to the project, as well as other green-energy tax incentives managed by the state Department of Revenue through 2020.

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Obligation Amount: \$20,000 REAP Grant

Date of Obligation: 2011

Congressional District: Representative Denny Heck- WA-10; Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell

Partners: City of Olympia; Farmers Market Community Solar Project LCC; Olympia Farmers Market; Puget Sound Energy

Demographics: Olympia, Thurston County, County; Population - \$48,338; Median household income \$58,239, higher than that of the state (\$57,573), according to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts.

Impact: \$5 million annual in sales; • 30-50 percent savings in power; 30 % Federal Tax Credit on contribution