



## Montana

Business and Cooperative Programs • Rural Energy for America Program

### Practicing Sustainability on the Eastern Edge of Glacier Park

In 2017, after years of planning, Sanford and Claire Stone realized their dream and broke ground on [Park Cabin Company](#) in Babb, Mont., an unincorporated farming and ranching community in Glacier County.

Their modern cabins are located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and serve as a base camp for folks who are visiting and adventuring in Glacier National Park.

When the Stones set out to create this tourism-based venture, they were determined to offset the impacts of development by employing sustainable practices. So, they applied for a grant through the [USDA Rural Development \(RD\) Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\)](#) and used the funding to invest in solar arrays. "It's important to us to preserve the incredible habitat here at the Crown of the Continent," said Sanford. "I'm not sure we would have had the guts to start the project without the additional investment from USDA RD."



*The 15,360 kilowatt-hours (per year) on-site solar array system generates about 90 percent of Park Cabin Company's annual energy needs. (Photo courtesy of Park Cabin Company)*

The Stones acknowledged that the solar arrays have resulted in a marked improvement to Park Cabin Company's bottom line because of reduced energy costs, and they've been able to attract new business from the eco-tourism sector.

"The USDA RD Mont. team was helpful in guiding us through the process and truly wanted us to be successful," Sanford shared. "The [Glacier County Regional Port Authority](#) also provided funding to help create this locally-sourced electricity." With tourism activities in Glacier National Park opening up after COVID-related shutdowns, and businesses starting to regain financial stability, the Stones are hopeful that others will follow their lead and pursue renewable energy resources. "Renewable energy is not just a good idea from an eco-conscious perspective, it makes a lot of sense from the business side of things. In fact, the cost savings from this helped us remain afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic," Sanford stated. "We'd love to share our success and encourage our neighbors to invest in similar projects with the USDA RD's help."

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**Obligation Amount:** \$8,177 grant with \$24,533 in additional funding provided by the borrower

**Date of Obligation:** 5/24/2019

**Congressional District:** Representative Rosendale Sr.; Senators Tester and Daines

**Partners:** None

**Demographics:** Babb, MT, with a population of 174 (2010 census), serves as a gateway to Glacier National Park

**Impact:** Providing sustainable and clean energy for a tourism-based cabin rental business