



VirginiaGreenTravel.org

2013 Virginia Green Travel Star Awards Green Travel Star



Most Innovative Green Project



Virginia Living Museum

Powered by the Sun: Virginia Living Museum

On Earth Day (2013) the Virginia Living Museum (VLM) dedicated one of the largest solar panel arrays on any tourist attraction in the state. The 42.6 kW solar power installation consists of 165 (280 watts each) pv panels, which will generate enough electricity to offset 5% of the museum's electrical usage. Besides the number of panels, what makes this solar array particularly impressive is that it is directly visible to museum guests even though it is a rooftop application. The solar panels were installed directly opposite our observatory deck. Visitors can not only view first-hand the solar pv panels and their supporting equipment but also view the sun from telescopes on the deck. This may be the only place in the country where a visitor can see both a solar pv panel and also view the source that almost limitless power (the sun).



Overall level of commitment

The VLM designed and installed a green building demonstration house in 2009 that highlights numerous energy saving techniques/products including solar power. With three solar panels this house is a demonstration of how solar power operates. The VLM continued to search for funding to allow the museum to install a commercial size solar power array to show the public the capacity of solar energy. A Dominion Power Foundation grant in 2013 and in-kind donations from Bay Electric Co. made this goal a reality with the dedication of the new solar panel array on Earth Day 2013.

Measurable environmental benefits or progress

The solar panel array is monitored constantly via two video screens that visitors can view in the museum. Screen readouts detail up to the minute kWh production from these solar panels as well as the money saved by the VLM from reduced power bills.

Cost savings

The VLM will save over \$5,000 per year from the energy produced by the solar panels. This cost savings information is updated in real time on the public monitors.

Customer outreach & engagement

The Virginia Living Museum is the kick-off site for the annual Solar Tour, which highlights commercial and residential solar applications in the region. People participating in the day-long event begin their day with a free, 30-minute tour of the VLM's solar applications. After the tour, visitors are free to go to more than 20 registered sites in the region.

Green attraction

The Virginia Living Museum has been a certified Virginia Green Attraction since 2008.



Visit Virginia Living Museum's Virginia Green profile at:

<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/PollutionPrevention/VirginiaGreen/Attractions/VALivingMuseum.pdf>

Virginia Green is run through a partnership between:



www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/PollutionPrevention/VirginiaGreen.aspx
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