

[My account](#)

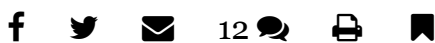
Local News

Saturday, February 18, 2023

After years of environmentalism, a decision to add solar



Arline and Jeff Culp pose for a portrait at their home in Quaker Hill Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022. The couple installed solar panels about five years ago and are thinking about installing more when they noticed their usage go up after purchasing a plug-in hybrid car. (Sarah Gordon/The Day)

[Buy Photo Reprints](#)

January 01, 2023 3:39 pm

By **Bridget Shirvell**

Drive through a residential neighborhood these days, and chances are you'll see at least one, if not several, homes with solar panels adorning the roofs. As the cost of solar energy has declined, more and more homeowners, like Arline and Jeff Culp, have added panels to their properties.

"We added them to do something good for the environment, take advantage of the tax benefits and lower our monthly electricity bill," Arline said.

For years, Arline and Jeff had toyed with installing solar panels to their Waterford home, but they hesitated, unsure of the right company to use, the placement of the panels and worried about having to cut down trees. Then in the fall of 2017, they took advantage of a program the town was running that vetted solar companies and helped residents get a group right for the panels.

"They've been great," said Jeff. "We've never had any downtime. Of course there's seasonal fluctuation. It starts producing more in the spring and it peaks a bit before going down for a bit when leaves start coming out, but then the sun gets higher and it goes up again."

Jeff and Arline have long considered themselves environmentalists. Making him think about the environmental part of the same time, Arline saw firsthand the impact of

"The turning point for me was treating a dog that kept getting sick. This dog would eat a lot of grass and we were convinced it was probably the lawn chemicals that they were using it," Arline said.

Shortly after moving from Pennsylvania to Waterford with their two school-aged children, the couple began changing their habits to be as sustainable as possible.

"A lot of it kicked in when we first moved here," Jeff said. "We planted native plants. We were getting organic food and we were nurturing our children wanting them to eat healthy and also wanting there to be a world left for them."

There's no way to protect future generations from the worst-case global warming scenarios without divesting from fossil fuels, starting with the energy system. According to a study published in the journal *Climatic Change*, of the 90 companies worldwide responsible for nearly two-thirds of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 1880 to 2010, 83 produced coal, oil and/or natural gas.

"If you care about justice and our children's future, I am appealing directly to you: demand that renewable energy is introduced now — at speed and at scale; demand an end to coal-fired power; demand an end to all fossil fuel subsidies." Those were the words of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres upon the release of the International Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) April 2022 report: *AR6 Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), which in 2021 laid out a roadmap of what it would require to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, from an energy standpoint wealthy countries would need to shut down virtually all fossil-fuel power plants by 2035, transitioning to using wind, solar or nuclear power.

Renewables made up roughly 20 percent of utility-scale U.S. electricity generation in 2020, the last year for which data is available. The bulk comes from wind power and hydropower, but solar generation, including from distribution, is the fastest-growing electricity source in the U.S.

Once they decided to add solar panels, Arline and Jeff found the installation process relatively smooth. The company evaluated their energy usage to determine how many panels it would need. A representative came out to determine the best placement and check the condition of their roof.

"We did replace part of the roof the panels were going on as part of their recommendation," Jeff said.

Sign-up to complete installation only took a few months, and by December 2017, the panels produced energy. To finance the system, the Culps took advantage of a five-year loan at a 0.99% interest rate, which according to estimates would be paid back within 10 years of using the solar. Of course, that number is a bit complicated by fluctuations in energy rates and the fact that their loan also covered the partial roof replacement and an electric hot water heater.

Because their system is tied to the grid, the Culps do not store energy in batteries. But their design is big enough that it supplies almost all of their needs. Thanks to net metering, which allows power to be sold back to the grid for several years, the couple got money back on their energy bill. They've seen that change this past year with the addition of a plug-in hybrid car, but if they want, they have room to add additional panels. But they say the energy bill wasn't the main reason they installed the panels but rather a commitment to doing better for the planet.

The panels on the roof along the back of their house overlook their garden and beehives. All a bet on the future.

5 five ways to 'green' your energy system

1. Research solar energy providers and make the transition for your household electricity.
2. If you can't go solar right now, you can still likely select a renewable energy supplier from your local utility company.
3. Do a home energy audit. You can have a professional energy audit done by Energize Connecticut.
4. Consider your lighting. What type of lightbulbs do you have, and can you replace them with more efficient choices, such as ENERGY STAR light-emitting diodes (LEDs) bulbs.
5. Contact your local, state and federal elected officials and ask them not to support new fossil fuel energy plants and oppose fossil fuel subsidies.

Comment threads are monitored for 48 hours after publication and then closed.

READER COMMENTS

Frank Rogers January 3, 2023 at 13:52

Joanne,
The Day was kind enough to publish a story that you already explained 100 times. That's your way of showing gratitude?
Unbelievable.

Marianne Mcnallen January 3, 2023 at 12:37

[Report](#)

Has anyone gotten solar panels from the NPU area? I've checked with several companies and they cannot work with NPU because of their requirements.

Joanne Philbrick January 3, 2023 at 11:16

[Report](#)

OK. We get it. The Day seems to have no other news to report so we continue to see this same article over and over.

CELESTE BROWN January 2, 2023 at 21:55

[Report](#)

Thanks, Paul!

Paul NUNES January 2, 2023 at 17:52

[Report](#)

That's funny I get that same bill a lot --->Eversource \$9.62 a month.

Paul NUNES January 2, 2023 at 17:50

[Report](#)

CELESTE, Posigen.

STEPHEN AHLCRONA January 2, 2023 at 17:23

[Report](#)

My panels are working great. I have 2300KW in the bank at eversource. I pay eversource \$9.62 a month.

CELESTE BROWN January 2, 2023 at 13:25

[Report](#)

Paul N., what company did you use???

PETER ROBERTS January 2, 2023 at 12:36

[Report](#)

We installed 13 solar panels 5 years ago. We lease them and we had no trees to remove. Even after the lease costs we are still ahead. As expected, we save less during a cloudy winter but do very well from late spring to fall. We do not have a battery as we never lose power. We live near two schools, the senior center and a court house. It was a good move for us.

Kathleen Coss January 2, 2023 at 09:37

[Report](#)

Add up the kilowatts you use per year and compare to what a solar system on your property would generate.
If you have trees on your property that would have to come down, then that cost can be added to the cost of the solar system when calculating tax credits.
<https://energizect.com/> is a good resource for information.

Paul NUNES January 2, 2023 at 09:04

Report

When it Snow's (6" plus) sometimes you have to wait 4-5 days for it to melt and slide off your panels. This is variable and depends on roof pitch too.

I'm lucky my roof faces 183 degrees South and no trees.

Your smart phone with it's compass will let you know if Solar is feasible for you.

Solar companies are now starting to offer battery back (\$5-10000.00 for them) for your system too.

The lifespan of panel is 20-30 years and the backup batteries 10-15 years.

My Eversource bill runs zero to 22.00 a month

R Blanch January 2, 2023 at 08:29

Report

After reading the headline I believed I was going to get useful info on the process of Solar. Instead we got a lesson in global warming....

Tym O'Byrne January 2, 2023 at 05:30

Report

I would have recommend replacement all the roof shingles when they did the ones under the panels, not very attractive. Subtracts from then value of the home.

JOHN W BILL SHEEHAN January 1, 2023 at 16:49

Report

I researched Solar for my home but found that I would have to take down trees that were not on my property to make the investment worthwhile, three different sales folks said Solar was not viable on my home. So, I bought a generator instead. Not very green but at least I do not lose power during a power outage anymore.



Mystic Seaport Museum comes alive for Wintertide festivities

Mystic — After a long winter's rest, Wintertide awakened the Mystic Seaport Museum on Saturday for the new year. From live reindeer and Saint Bernard dogs, to ice sculptures and s'mores, there was som...



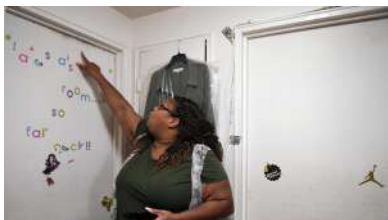
Cheeseman divides days between children's museum and Capitol

Editor's note: Day reporters followed two stat
the legislature is in session. East Lyme — Hol



Howard balances being a legislator and a police officer

Editor's note: The Connecticut General Assembly website says the legislature "is considered to be part-time." The National Conference of State Legislatures puts Connecticut between full-t...



Courtney says new HUD mold standards a start; more needed

U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, called it a "wake-up call" that Branford Manor, a federally subsidized housing development in the City of Groton, was inspected in June 2022 and received a pass...

▲ Back To Top

About The Day

The Day Publishing Company

47 Eugene O'Neill Drive
P.O. Box 1231
New London, CT 06320-1231 USA

Staff Profiles

President/Publisher Newsroom Advertising/Marketing
FAQs Jobs at The Day Contact Us

Connect With Us



Quick Links

E-Paper 🏆 Contests Horoscopes Puzzles TV
Calendar Milestones Newsletters

Advertising

About Our Ads Advertise Place A Classified Ad Contacts
Find New London Area Jobs Business Directory

Services

Photo Reprints Privacy Policy/Terms RSS Text/SMS Alerts