

# A considerable spike in interest in photovoltaic or solar systems as alternate source of energy

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Some have referred to it as an emotional reaction, but no matter how you put it, there has been a considerable spike in interest in photovoltaic or solar systems as an alternate source of energy. Many retailers, nationally, are exploring this alternative source of energy as well. Green roofs as well as photovoltaics are considered, by many, as the hottest trend in the roofing industry. Let's dive a bit deeper into the solar arena and discuss green roofs another time.

Typically, most of us perceive the roof as a place to hold the HVAC equipment. No one looks at the roof until it causes problems, such as leaks. Today, your roof may be utilized to enhance your bottom line

When exploring solar systems, as one can expect, there are many varieties of applications. For this article we will focus on ones that are installed on the roof (commercial applications). There are quite a few manufacturers offering PV systems. These can vary from the old standard panels (rack mounted) to ones that are installed as part of the roof membrane system (integrated). The technology in this industry is advancing at a very rapid rate.

When one analyzes the cost of installing a new PV system in contrast to today's fuel costs, the cost associated with the investment in a PV system does not yet meet the line where the costs of remaining with the same power or energy source as in place. However, many industry professionals claim that in five years, the cost of PV generated electricity will compete directly with utility costs.

There are also several alternatives to obtaining a PV system. One of the more popular and likely fastest growing is known as a Power Purchase Agreement or PPA. Without going into great detail the PPA is an agreement or contract where an outside company finances and owns the system. The benefit to you is that there are no up front costs and you sign a long term contract for power, typically below the current rate. As with most things today, the Internet is a great tool when looking to learn more about the PPAs.

Unless clearly specified in your roof guarantee, roof manufacturers

**Be sure to have someone who knows roofing systems and applications as well as photovoltaics and how they interact. There are numerous factors that must be considered when PV systems are planned. This "someone" should have your best interest in mind and working for you as opposed to an installer or manufacturer. It is best to have the right people involved in the early design stages.**

will not cover or incur the cost of removing overburden, such as pavers, when investigating and repairing a roof leak. Furthermore, PV systems are much more involved and require people who understand the system itself as well as the roof below. Regardless, if your guarantee covers overburden, there are outside professionals that have to be brought in to conduct the investigation. The costs incurred in these cases may be significant. Lastly, who will cover these costs? If the PV system is not up and running, who will incur these costs for the lost revenue?

I am not writing this to scare anyone away from exploring photovoltaic systems. The objective

here is to give you a rough idea of what to look out for should you decide to pursue a PV system. Be sure to have someone who knows roofing systems and applications as well as photovoltaics and how they interact. There are numerous factors that must be considered when PV systems are planned. This "someone" should have your best interest in mind and working for you as opposed to an installer or manufacturer. It is best to have the right people involved in the early design stages.

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