



Saving By Going Solar Chevron Energy Solutions Helps Schools Harness Solar Power

Tom Leong, Contra Costa Community College District: We began this project in 2005. It began with an energy audit, which was conducted by Chevron Energy Solutions. They helped us to identify what measures we could take. After looking at that, we then finalized our project, which was the installation of the solar panels as well as the energy-efficient lighting.

Jim Davis, President, Chevron Energy Solutions: Chevron recognizes that, in order to meet the world's growing global demand for energy, it's going to take every molecule of energy possible. Our technical experts go into facilities and find ways first to reduce their demand for energy with energy efficiency and conservation measures. Then once we've maximized that, we then look at onsite generation opportunities, such as solar.

Tom Leong: One of the components of our project that has generated the most attention has been our solar panel installation. The solar panels are located on 34 parking canopies on all three of our campuses. We expect the solar panels to supply up to half of the district's electric needs during peak times. One of the unforeseen benefits of the solar panels has been the wonderful covered parking. It's amazing to watch every morning as students and staff members are fighting for those parking spaces to be parking underneath those solar panels. We also installed energy-efficient lighting systems at the colleges and our district offices. An example of one of these smart systems is the ability to turn lights on or off when someone leaves or enters a room, saving the district money as well as energy. Not only is the lighting warmer, much more conducive to a working environment, but I think it really helps our students to feel the even flow and the warmth of the light now.

There's no doubt a project of this magnitude is daunting. It's very challenging. We were scared. But you know what? Now that it's said and done, we're really glad that we did it. We feel like we've taken a leadership role in our community and that we really are helping not only the environment but the future for our children.