

Contractor Relies on Technology for Accurate Solar Installations

COMPANY:

American Solar Electric

INDUSTRY:

Solar

CHALLENGE:

Keeping up with the increasing demand for installations of solar energy systems.

SOLUTION:

Improving the installation process by using the EagleView® SolarReport™ to accurately design the system and calculate the materials.

PRODUCTS:

EagleView SolarReport



Ten years and 10 million solar systems in American homes and businesses, is it possible? The Senate Energy committee believes it is since they approved a bill by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., July 21, 2010 to encourage the installation of 10 million solar installations on American homes in 10 years. (Reference: <http://sanders.senate.gov/newsroom/news>)

For those in the roofing and solar industry this is great news and a major challenge. Many believe that more than ever they need to use every tool and technology available to meet the upcoming alternative energy demand.

One tool that should make the 10 million solar system installations easier is a new report from EagleView®. Recently introduced, the new, solar 3D roof measurement report is an innovative breakthrough for solar integrators, installers and the overall roofing industry offering everything

needed to calculate solar exposure, roof square footage and panel placement.

EagleView is well known in the insurance and roofing markets but as a relative newcomer to the solar industry this new report promises to gain the technology company plenty of attention. Many see EagleView as the key to changing how the solar industry measures, estimates and installs solar roofing systems. The distinction of the EagleView reports is in their extreme accuracy, achieved by the use of patent-pending aerial 3D roof measurement technology.

The technology was invented in the heart of software development country, Seattle, WA, by a roofing contractor and image software developer. The two EagleView founders developed software that could take aerial images and run them through image processing software



Will Herndon

American Solar Electric

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creating a 3D model of the roof. From that model, measurements, diagrams and reports were then created. Instead of measuring by hand or sketching from satellite images, contractors would be able to receive accurate, detailed dimensions and 3D diagram files via e-mail.

"We used our technology and feedback from solar installers to create a report offering important diagrams for grid layout, solar orientation and azimuth. The report provides the ability for solar installers to accurately calculate material needs and overall positioning of solar equipment," stated Chris Barrow, former president and CEO of EagleView.

American Solar Electric (ASE), Phoenix, AZ, was instrumental in helping EagleView design the industry-changing SolarReport. Specializing in residential solar installations and designs, ASE installs solar electric systems that have everything homeowners need to generate their own electricity. This includes system design, approvals, installation and full utility coordination. With over 2,300 Arizona homes and businesses featuring ASE work on their roofs, this company has positioned itself as a leader in the market.

"We are focused on the residential market," stated Will Herndon, executive vice president of construction for American Solar Electric, Inc. "The demand for solar continues to grow in Arizona. We are focused on the market and we are using every means of technology to improve our process, sales and installations. We want to do our share of those 10 million homes."

"I saw EagleView in a trade publication and called. Once I found out the value and speed of what they were offering, I knew that we needed to incorporate it into our process," continued Herndon. "Since then, we have incorporated the EagleView PremiumReport™ into our daily production. As soon as we have a contract, we order an EagleView. Our supervisors then have it in their hands usually within 24 hours. They use it when they go out to the job to finish all estimations and it is part of our customer report that they produce. It is a powerful tool for us."

"ASE had been utilizing our premium report for its solar installations so we knew it would be the type of company that would be able to give us strong, accurate information in developing our SolarReport," stated Bob Grant, former executive vice president for EagleView. "The azimuth table was a key contribution from ASE."

"We see the azimuth table as one of the strongest components of this report," said Herndon. "In fact, the azimuth page is awesome.

The most important part for us is that it accounts for magnetic declination. Having the accuracy of EagleView measurements is critical to the solar information since we know that performance estimates for the next twenty years are at stake."

"Our next step is to utilize the SolarReport throughout our entire sales and production process," Herndon continued. "We see the azimuth diagram and the other new elements in the SolarReport as key to helping us not only estimate and install the solar systems but sell them to the homeowner." Another sounding board for the new report was CI Services. "We tested the SolarReports and found them to be an incredible asset to our ability to estimate, plan and install a solar roof system," confirmed Bill Baley, president of CI Services, Mission Viejo, CA.

CI Services specializes in commercial and residential roofing installations with a strong focus on solar and green applications. "We are committed to incorporating new technologies and strong roofing practices into our solar business. By using EagleView measurements we are confident that we will provide accurate and precise estimates. It allows us to make sure the solar installations will work for the homeowner and meet local building codes," Baley stated.

"The new SolarReport is very helpful from a sales point of view. As part of our test, we provided a property owner report that comes with the overall report to the homeowner. The feedback was great. It provided the visual that we needed to educate our potential customer. Helping them understand the process and the benefits of solar is the first and foremost challenge. Once that is accomplished, closing the sale is relatively easy," noted Baley.

"We also like the new report for production. In particular, the grid page is great in helping us plan production. We were able to calculate panel placement and electrical runs very easily using the grid," Baley stated. "The accuracy of the SolarReport hit the mark as all EagleView reports do."

"The combination of contractor feedback and strong software development has created a tool that is going to change the solar industry," confirmed Herndon. "We see this as one of the most powerful tools to come along in a long time."

With EagleView now generating numerous SolarReports every day, it is a good bet that in the next 10 years those 10 million homes will all benefit from an EagleView. 