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Money from the sun



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Scott Fraker
David Bolt of Sustainable Future, left, and Anne Garcia Garland look at the photovoltaic solar panels on Garland's roof.

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The Oak Ridger

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OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — The first home in Oak Ridge to generate solar power with the ability to sell the power back to the Tennessee Valley Authority went into operation earlier this month.

The solar power array is installed at the Outer Drive home of recently retired businessman T.J. Garland and Oak Ridge City Councilwoman Anne Garcia Garland.

Under a TVA Green Power Switch program known as Generation Partners, the Garlands can sell excess power generated at their house to the public utility for 12 cents per kilowatt-hour above their electric rate.

So, if the Garlands are paying 10 cents per kilowatt-hour for their electricity from TVA, they can sell their solar power for 22 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Margaret Beams, an Oak Ridge Electric Department division manager, said the average residential array produces \$44 worth of electricity per month.

T.J. Garland said his solar power system probably cost roughly \$30,000, including labor.

"We hope that this home will be one of many in our community, and we are very proud that this is just one example of Oak Ridge's sustainability efforts," City Manager Jim O'Connor said.

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Beams said five other people have expressed interest in the Green Power Switch Generation Partners program, but no one else has signed up yet.

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The city staff and Sustainable Future of Harriman had a ceremony earlier this month at the Garland's home to celebrate the project. Sustainable Future designed and installed the system, which includes an 8-foot by 10-foot array of photovoltaic solar panels on the roof and 24 lead-acid batteries beneath a porch.

T.J. Garland, who has a 10-year contract with TVA, said he and Anne will use some of the power and sell the rest. His Oak Ridge home had to be rewired for the solar power system, which can provide power to electric outlets, overhead lights and some appliances.

He said he's spent a year buying the parts, with Sustainable Future helping. It's that company's first project

in Oak Ridge, although, elsewhere, workers are putting in at least one system each month, said Harvey Abouleta, Sustainable Future's director of sales and marketing.

The city Electric Department also helped with the Garland's project.

Garland, who previously used a larger solar system in Oklahoma, said he has recognized the push for renewable energy, including with so-called "cap-and-trade" greenhouse gas legislation pending in Washington, D.C.

He said the solar system makes him eligible for a 30 percent tax credit, as well as cash incentives.

A city press release said Oak Ridge and TVA began a pilot study in May to buy electricity from qualifying renewable generation systems owned by local customers.

"The purpose of the pilot is to study capabilities of such systems to supply electric generation resources for TVA's Green Power Switch Program and TVA's strategic environmental policy goals for acquisition of clean energy," the press release said.

TVA says program participants support the environment by helping keep the Tennessee Valley "clean and green."

"They also benefit by defraying the costs of their renewable system installation and lowering their monthly energy bills through the revenue they receive from the sale of the green power," TVA says.

See <http://www.tva.com/greenpowerswitch/partners/> for more information about the TVA Green Power Switch Generation Partners program.

John Huotari can be contacted at (865) 220-5533.

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Way to go, Garlands! Nice to see someone DOING something instead of just talking a problem to death.

rayt435

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