

Colorado Springs Utilities joins in solar project

Colorado Springs Utilities and SunPower Corp. have agreed to design and build a 6-megawatt solar photovoltaic power system at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. Construction will begin this month on the 30-acre site, and the plant is expected to be operational by summer 2011. Colorado Springs Utilities and SunPower will each own 50% of the renewable energy credits and environmental benefits associated with the system.

"This solar power system will create local jobs, reduce the demand for fossil fuels, and improve air quality in our community," said Colorado Springs Utilities CEO Jerry Forte. "We are confident that, with SunPower as our experienced solar provider, the Air Force Academy solar plant will be built to high quality standards and will meet forecasted output over the 25-year life of the system."

The facility will use SunPower's "Tracker" system, which follows the sun's movement during the day, increasing sunlight capture by up to 25% over conventional fixed-tilt systems while significantly reducing land use requirements, the company said. The project is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

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