

#63 Solar Pay Back

It is good to see new homes being built and to celebrate their completion. There is always new and very creative products and design elements to appreciate and a welcome sense that there is confidence and sufficiency in the community. Very few of these proud and enjoyable house warming events include on-site renewable energy and really effective energy efficiency measures and systems. The remark is usually similar to this - we looked into it and it just doesn't pay for itself. It's still too expensive.

This is simply not true. I will get to demonstrating that in the next paragraph. But let's take a look at the remark about energy efficiency and renewable energy production in homes. Most of the new homes being built are more than 2000 square feet. Most are twice or more times bigger than 2000 square feet. Many are homes built by people whose children have moved on to their own homes. There is much pride and appreciation for a host of features in these large homes but no requirement that these homes have a guaranteed pay back within 5 years. Sitting out front or in the garage are usually 2 or more vehicles of relatively new age that do not get 40 miles per gallon. Yet lumber and other building materials as well as gas and other fossil fuel costs are soaring upward, not falling. Many new home owners remember President Nixon. When he was in the White House, a barrel of oil was \$4. It was a few cents from \$124 a barrel yesterday. In the last 3 months, gasoline prices have increased twice as much the complete price of gasoline when Nixon was President. Yet people are purchasing millions of vehicles that are less fuel efficient than in years past. Where is the required pay back in a few years? Cars and homes produce 80% of the pollution that poses the greatest threat to our national and personal security. There is great expense and danger as well as very ominous implications for the next generation in these facts and in the decisions we make about them.

So, let's look briefly at solar electricity or photo voltaic for homes. It always appreciates rather than depreciates in value. If your electric bill is \$1400 a year now, it will be \$5000 or more in 25 years. It may be twice this amount. Or, install solar electric panels, shingles, solar wall, etc. and your electric bill will be reduced over current expense every year as you produce your own electricity and the savings can be used to pay for the system in 10 years or less and your house appreciates in value because of this high performing feature. NYSERDA which should be a household word by now will pay 50% of the initial cost of the system and pay the first 4% of the interest on your loan. Complete warranties on the solar panels for 25 years mean that the majority of the years of the system will provide absolutely free electricity. If the home is sold, the sale price will increase by the cost of the solar electric system or sell at a premium because of the greater savings each year as your electric costs remain the same as they were 20 some years ago while the electricity cost to others is many times greater. The greater assessed value of the home created by solar electric installation does not increase school or property tax. Mortgages are available that fold the cost and the efficiencies of solar electric into their structure and rates. NYSERDA also provides significant grants for the construction of a home where solar electric systems are part of the design.

A new home is about the future. Today, the truth is, you can afford renewable energy in your home. When you stop to think about all that is happening in our lives and how fast changes and increased costs of living occur, it is very likely you will conclude that

you cannot any longer afford to live without solar electric and other renewable energy systems.