



For Immediate Release
September 23, 2019

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Juda Students Get Hands-On Lesson in Solar Power

Juda, WI - Construction of Juda School District's new solar array began on Tuesday and Juda High School students got a first-hand look at the solar installation process. Ryan Harkins of Synergy Renewables, designed the 4-kilowatt solar array that will help the school offset its electricity consumption and reduce its utility bills.

Sixteen students, mostly seniors from Juda's Calculus and Engineering classes participated in the installation process.

"Helping put solar panels on our school really shows what our Engineering class can accomplish," said Juda student Tristan Geisking.

Harkins showed the students how to install the panels' racking and connection devices, and the students also learned how solar energy is produced.

"Developing a solar project from the planning stages to the installation is an experience the students will remember for years to come," said Harkins. "The students did a fantastic job."

In 2012, the Juda School District set a goal of generating 10% of their electricity from renewable energy. The district had 36 solar panels installed in 2014 to offset its electric use. The new solar installation adds 12 more panels to the school's rooftop and the two installations combined offset nearly 10% of the school's electricity.

To help with costs, Juda received grants from RENEW Wisconsin's *Solar for Good* program and the Public Service Commission's Office of Energy Innovation. These grants helped fund

the solar array, and a host of other energy efficiency measures at the school including building envelope improvements, HVAC optimization, and 100% LED lighting.

“Initially, the proposed payback to the school district would take 6 years. Now, thanks to the Energy Innovation Grant, the school is already realizing the savings,” stated Mario Millonzi, President of Upper 90 Energy and contractor on the project.

Juda is now saving over \$30,000 per year in utility costs, and over \$6,000 in yearly maintenance costs. The school, however, sees the cost-savings as only one part of the project’s benefits.

“At Juda, we issue the challenge to the students to make the school, the community, and the world better,” said Juda Math and Engineering Instructor, Scott Anderson. “This project accomplishes all three.”

Students at Juda were key to the success of the projects. In addition to helping with the installation, they helped write grants and worked with Upper 90 on the energy saving details.

“Creating students who are aware of their role as stewards of our world may be the single most important thing I teach,” added Anderson. “Once they get started, it’s great to see what they can accomplish.”

About Solar for Good

RENEW Wisconsin’s Solar for Good initiative fosters the expansion of solar power among mission-based nonprofits and houses of worship in Wisconsin. Through a generous partnership with Couillard Solar Foundation, RENEW Wisconsin awards solar panels to nonprofit organizations, helping them switch to clean, renewable, solar energy.

About RENEW Wisconsin

RENEW Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization which promotes renewable energy in Wisconsin. We work on policies and programs that support solar power, wind power, biogas, local hydropower, geothermal energy, and electric vehicles. More information on RENEW’s website: www.renewwisconsin.org.