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## Clark's Market Taps Locally Produced Clean Energy

Clark's Market, a community-based independent with eight stores in western Colorado, is teaming up with local solar garden developer the Clean Energy Collective to reduce energy costs and its environmental impact by shifting to locally-produced clean energy with the purchase of solar power in the CEC's community-owned solar gardens.

Sustainability is part of Clark's mission and the idea of installing solar panels at Clark's stores had been considered many times in the past, but because of the upfront capital cost and long-term return it wasn't a possibility, said the grocer. Purchasing panels in the off-site community solar gardens—enough to completely offset the energy used in its pharmacies—has allowed Clark's to pursue its environmental goals by generating home-grown electricity at a cost that meets financial parameters.

"After considering using solar panels on our rooftops, the cost and complexity of a rooftop system proved to be prohibitive," says company president Tom Clark. "The Clean Energy Collective offered the quickest, easiest, most cost-effective and, most importantly, functional option available."

Clarks will be recognized as one of the CEC's "First Founder Members" to distinguish its leadership in the CEC's business membership group.

The Clean Energy Collective model allows customers to own panels in a locally-sited array and directly reap the benefits on their electric bills. The model is facilitating mainstream adoption by residents and local businesses by eliminating cost and logistical barriers.

"Clark's stores and company culture exemplifies the notion of community, so it's a natural fit for everyone," said CEC founder Paul Spencer.

The CEC has an 858 kW facility operating in Rifle (currently the largest community-owned solar garden in the nation) and an 80 kW pilot facility in El Jebel. Along with a 1 MW site in El Jebel pending construction, the CEC has recently received approval to build a fourth solar facility near Telluride.

According to Clark's the system produces the following benefits for the company and environment:

- System cost: \$3.35/W
- Reduces lifetime costs from 34.5¢/kWh to 2.3¢/kWh for the power produced by the solar panels
- Produces nearly \$309,000 in lifetime power cost savings
- Reduces 1.2 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Offsets 1.4 million car miles
- Equivalent to planting 1,943 trees

Clark's Market owns and operates eight stores in Western Colorado and Utah, with stores in Basalt, Battlement Mesa, Norwood, Telluride, Crested Butte and Blanding, Utah. It's a member of Associated Food Stores, a cooperative of 600 independently-owned grocery stores in eight western states.