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February kicks off with solar gains and icy roads



[Chris Meehan](/about-us/)
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Feb 07, 2011

While the solar industry continues to grow, it's not big enough to warrant a Super Bowl ad yet. Maybe in 2012.

Who knows, by then a company like Genesis Electronics, selling [solar-powered chargers](#)

[for iPhones](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/genesis-electronics-expands-iphone-4-solar-charger-into-stores-020111/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/genesis-electronics-expands-iphone-4-solar-charger-into-stores-020111/>>, could have a SuperBowl ad. Or

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maybe it will be a solar leasing company like SolarCity or Sungevity, after they've expanded nationwide. They're both expanding their reach in 2011, for instance, fast on the heels of SolarCity's expansion into Oregon. SolarCity said it will start offering solar leases in Maryland and Washington, D.C. Then last week, it announced that [Citigroup was investing \\$40 million into SolarCity's coffers](#)

<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/solarcity-receives-40-million-investment-020411/>, allowing it to expand the number of SolarLeases it can offer in 2011.

Residential or Commercial
Property Residential



On the other hand, you might not need a solar lease for a new home. You could buy into a community solar project. For instance, folks are pretty happy with Clean Energy Collective's [first community-owned solar array](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/clean-energy-collective-offers-net-metering-to-masses-020111/> in Colorado. The company is now developing more [solar gardens in Colorado](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/colorado-energy-collective-community-solar-array-011211/> and looking to expand its model elsewhere.

Perhaps your next new home will be built with solar integrated in from day one. Developers are working on projects that include solar in the blueprints. For instance, the [2500 R revitalization project](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/pacific-housing-inc-building-cheap-net-zero-homes-020411/> includes 34 net-zero energy homes being built by Pacific Housing Inc., which include photovoltaic arrays.

The homes in the California project are designed as entry-levels houses and will be offered below market price. That's not the case of BuiltSmart Resources' sprawling 3,900 square foot, [solar-powered, net-zero energy home in San Antonio](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/first-net-zero-home-in-san-antonio-opens-to-public-020111/>, Texas. The house would cost about \$550,000 on a normal-sized lot, but it's on a two-acre lot near the city and is valued at \$1.3 million.

With all this growth in the industry, it's no surprise that schools are involved in the growth of clean energy. Even in the rainy northwestern U.S., [schools like Clatsop Community College are installing solar](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/clatsop-community-college-installing-solar-panels-020211/>. The school recently completed work on its Towler Hall renovation project, which included the installation of a 42.5-kilowatt array.

Last week saw the opening of [Ecotech Institute's new campus in Colorado](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/ecotech-institute-opens-green-campus-in-colorado-020411/>, the first U.S. trade school dedicated purely to renewable energy education. It's not that other Colorado higher education institutions aren't interested in renewable energy—Colorado State University's foothills campus gets a full third of its power from solar now that the school completed the second phase of its [5.3 megawatt solar array](#) <http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/csu-gets-third-of-its-power-from-solar-panels-020211/>.

California, of course, refuses to be left behind.

Last week, [Wells Fargo](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/wells-fargo-completes-funding-solar-installations-020411/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/wells-fargo-completes-funding-solar-installations-020411/>> invested \$100 million to install solar at the University of San Diego and five other California schools.

But not everyone in California is happy about solar being installed at their school.

Parents and students of Dwyer Middle School in Huntington Beach, Calif., [protested the planned location of a solar array](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/dwyer-middle-school-students-protest-solar-installation-020211/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/dwyer-middle-school-students-protest-solar-installation-020211/>> on the school's front lawn.

[Georgia Power](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/georgia-power-signs-first-wholesale-solar-generation-contract-020311/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/georgia-power-signs-first-wholesale-solar-generation-contract-020311/>> made the solar news twice last week. First the company announced that it would purchase a 1 megawatt solar farm and sell the power generated to Dalton Utilities under a wholesale contract, the first time the company has made such an arrangement with a solar farm. Second, the company said it is [installing photovoltaics along some of its electric lines](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/georgia-power-to-experiment-with-solar-installations-020311/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/georgia-power-to-experiment-with-solar-installations-020311/>> to study how distributed solar generation will impact the company's power network in Georgia.

It seems like they're getting the picture in Georgia. But in some states, like South Dakota, [a lack of incentive programs](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/south-dakota-lacks-solar-incentives-020111/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/south-dakota-lacks-solar-incentives-020111/>> and lack of interest from the state's electric cooperatives has stymied growth in solar. The state could benefit from developing large-scale solar plants by selling the power produced to more populous states nearby.

Heck, the state would be an ideal location for large-scale, concentrated solar power plants. Such projects, which include solar power towers, troughs and solar powered Stirling engines are already expected to be on the rise in 2011 and beyond, according to [a new report from Lux Research](http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/csp-to-grow-substantially-in-2011-020311/) <<http://www.cleanenergyauthority.com/solar-energy-news/csp-to-grow-substantially-in-2011-020311/>> .

In all, it was another busy week for solar, and while the industry is gaining yardage, it's going to be interesting to watch how many touchdowns the industry can score against the entrenched fossil fuel-based energy industry in 2011.

Your Comments

[#1](#) <[#comment-260](#)> [Erik \(Ecotech Institute\)](http://www.ecotechinstitute.com/) <<http://www.ecotechinstitute.com/>> on 2.07.2011 at 4:00 PM

Article Correction: Classes at Ecotech Institute actually started back in July 2010 but the new facility opened January 2011 in Aurora, Colorado. Thanks for including us in your article!

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