

# Solar Garden: OCEC's Renewable Power Resource Expanding

In 2014, Otero County Electric Cooperative installed a Solar Garden adjacent to its



Alamogordo Substation. The project was constructed to provide renewable energy for members and valuable experience to employees.

The existing solar garden consists of 253 panels, 300 watts per panel totaling 75.9 kW. The panels are separated into individually metered systems, which consist of 3.3 kW residential-sized systems.

Each of these systems panel status, output and production of energy can be monitored remotely via the web. OCEC members can monitor one of these systems through our website to see how much energy has been generated since it was brought online, the environmental benefits achieved, the greenhouse gasses that have been avoided and the carbon offset.

Since the Solar Garden was constructed, it has produced about 241,000 megawatt hours (MWh), or enough electricity to power 23 homes per year. An expansion of the existing solar field is in the works and when the project is complete, another 74 kW will be added, almost doubling the size of OCEC's Solar Garden.

If you would like more information on the Solar Garden or to monitor one of the units, please visit our website, [www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com), and click on the "Community" tab of the main page.

## How to be Energy Efficient in Dry Climates

### Heat reduction is priority one

In warm climates, the majority of energy used to make the home feel comfortable is spent on home air conditioning and cooling. The first priority is heat reduction. However, in humid areas, moisture reduction is nearly as important as lowering the indoor air temperature. If a home has too much moisture, indoor air quality can be comprised and mold and mildew problems can develop. This is especially critical to families with allergy sufferers.

### Energy efficiency for hot and dry climates

In hot, dry climates, you are battling the blazing hot sun, which heats up the surface of your home. As the heat beats down on your home's roof, windows and walls, the heat conducts to the inside. However, there are some basic steps you can take to make your home more comfortable and energy efficient in hot, dry climates.

Starting from the top, it makes sense that light colored roofs reflect the sun's heat away

from the home, whereas a dark color absorbs the heat. Make sure you have a vented area directly under your roof to allow some of the heat to dissipate and reflect back. A vented roof effectively shades the rest of the home. It is also important to properly seal your home's thermal envelope. Leaky ducts, windows and doors can cause energy loss, making the HVAC system work much harder and drive up your energy costs. It pays to seal windows, doors and duct work. According to the Dept. of Energy, on average, households lose approximately 20 percent of their heated and cooled air through the duct system to the outside. Homes that are "sealed tight" are easier to keep cool and dry.

### DIY savings

Strategic landscaping can also make a big difference in hot climates. In addition to the aesthetic value, well placed trees can take heat gain from the sun and provide shade by creating a canopy for the home. While occasional trimming, pruning and replacement may be necessary, properly placed trees can save between \$100 and \$250 annually.

## National Lineman Appreciation Month

April is National Linemen Appreciation Month. We want to give a shout out to our awesome linemen who work so hard to keep our power on. You are greatly appreciated.

**Thank you for a job well done!**

### Board of Trustees



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### Board Meeting

The board of trustees meets the third Friday of the month at 9:00 a.m. at the cooperative.



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