

# Watt's Happening? #122

by Don Pettit

for Peace Energy Renewable Energy Cooperative

www.peaceenergy.ca ph 250-782-3882



## Solar myths debunked



*While adding solar to the roof of your home, farm or business is not quite a DIY project, professional installation usually takes only a day or two. With millions of solar roofs installed around the world, parts and procedures have been perfected, making installation quick, easy and robust.*

Every day or two, some one million solar panels are installed around the world.

The global growth rate of solar has outstripped all other sources of energy for two years in a row, even beating out wind power, which has been leading for some time.

France has announced a plan to invest \$30 billion in solar over the next 20 years to replace

it's aging nuclear fleet. China is crazy for solar. So are India and Japan, all with massive solar programs, and, in spite of Trump's best efforts, it's still booming in the U.S.

Clearly, there must be some really good reasons for this trend. Practical, straightforward financial reasons. These same reasons apply to you and your home, farm, ranch or business.

Yet even though solar has certainly entered the mainstream in most of the world, many people are still skeptical, especially in western Canada where solar is relatively new.

For many it seems strange that we can generate our own electricity, reduce or eliminate our electrical bills, reduce our pollution footprint, increase the resale value of our home or business and even

help our home sell faster.

This skepticism comes from, I think, some persistent myths. Here are four common ones and why you shouldn't believe in them.

### **Myth #1: Solar only works in sunny climates**

Solar panels love lots of sun when they can get it, but low light does not mean they are not working. Panels can absorb sunlight even on cloudy days, as proven by cloudy Germany, a world leader in solar. Modern solar systems maximize sunlight absorption and generate maximum output. This high efficiency means that solar works in almost any climate and in every season.

In our own Peace Region, we have a world-class solar energy resource, with our hours of sunlight outstripping most other areas of Canada. Our lower solar output in the winter, when the sun is low and not up for long, is more than made up for by our very long days in the spring, summer and fall.

This works perfectly for a "grid-tied" solar system, when our extra summer energy can be used up in the lean months of winter. B.C., Alberta and the Yukon all have streamlined systems that make it easy for a homeowner or business to grid-tie their solar power system.

### **Myth #2: You need a large roof space for solar**

Just like other new technologies (think of microchips and computers) solar panels have gotten smaller and more powerful. High efficiency panels take up less space because they generate more electricity per square metre. New add-on technologies, like voltage optimizers and micro-inverters, also improve the power output of your solar array, while minimizing

the effects of shading. Today, most homes have more than enough roof space to provide all or most of their electricity needs.

### **Myth #3: Installing solar is a long, drawn-out hassle.**

While adding solar to the roof of your home, farm or business is not quite a DIY project (although some folks do install their own), installation usually takes only a day or two. Sort of like having your roof re-shingled, an experienced team of solar installers arrives and bing-bang-boom it's done. Remember, millions of solar roofs have now been installed around the world. Installation parts and methods have been perfected, all designed to make installation quick, easy and robust.

### **Myth #4: Solar will decrease the value of my home.**

The U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

found that solar panels help homes sell faster and for more money than those without solar. They also found that a large majority of homeowners feel positively about their decision to go solar, and buyers of homes with solar are more satisfied than are comparison buyers. A significantly higher percentage indicates that they would buy the same houses again. Studies in Ontario, where solar has been common for a decade now, show similar results.

There are many, many good reasons why the world is going solar as fast as it possibly can. These same good, practical reasons apply to your home, farm or business.

... solar panels  
help homes  
sell faster  
and for more  
money than  
those without  
solar.