

Solar brightens Napa

by Becky Brun - 12/4/07

<http://www.sustainableindustries.com/energy/12116221.html>

NAPA VALLEY, CALIF. Havens Wine Cellars is the latest Napa Valley winery to plug into solar power. The winery says it expects its new 47-kilowatt solar system to fuel the company's anticipated 60 percent growth over the next four years, according to the company. All told, the solar array could save the company \$14,000 annually.

San Francisco-based Sunlight Electric designed and installed the system. "These are businesses committed to sustainability," says Rob Erlichman, Sunlight Electric's founder and CEO. Napa County wineries have adopted solar power 42 times faster than California businesses overall, Erlichman says. Napa County produces more solar energy per capita than nine other Bay Area counties, according to the Northern California Solar Association.

A recent Sierra Club survey of 131 municipalities in 13 Northern California counties found Napa Valley municipalities charge more than most Bay Area municipalities to install solar systems. With municipalities charging wide-ranging fees for solar system permits, the Sierra Club recommends a flat \$300 fee for all of California. Napa's city council is reportedly considering reducing its fee to encourage even more wineries and farmers in the area to invest in solar systems.