

Hay River Seniors Center Installs Solar Panels

System will recover its cost in 10 years, and last another 35 to 40

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The future is bright for the Whispering Willows Seniors complex in Hay River, where this week crews are installing the 240 solar modules on the roof.

The result will be the largest array of rooftop solar panels in the Northwest Territories, and the second largest array overall.

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Klaus Dohring is with Green Sun Rising, the company that won the tender from N.W.T. housing to install the system.

He says the system will generate 60 kilowatts of power.

"Looking at the total annual electricity consumption of the building based on historical data, the solar system is projected to meet approximately 80 per cent of the annual electricity need."

Dohring says it will take less than 10 years to recover the cost to purchase and install the system, but he says the system will last 35 to 40 years.

"It comes down to forward-thinking by those involved."

Gene Hachey is the owner of Northern Energy Innovations. He's also helping to install the system.

"It's gonna save them a lot of money. It's going to displace a lot of fossil fuels."

Hachey says interest in solar power in the North is on the rise.

"Once people recognize the merits of it and once people recognize the benefits and once people recognize the payback... I think you'll see a lot more people putting systems up."

The seniors centre will still use power from the grid when necessary.

Dohring says snow and ice hamper the system, but colder weather actually increases the amount of power generated.

The system will be up and running this Thursday.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/hay-river-seniors-centre-installs-solar-panels-1.2769223>