

Saving and Earning Money With Solar Power

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine



Solar energy has become [quite the controversial issue](#) here in Arizona over the last few years. Whatever your feeling about the state and country's dependence upon fossil fuels, the facts are in: solar power is a clean and sustainable source of power. This is why more and more companies are finding ways to implement solar panels into their building designs. It's why more cities all over the country--even here in the foothills--are finding ways to harvest solar energy. And, of course, it's why you should use solar energy in your home.

Average Savings

Installing solar panels can help you reduce your power bills. In the average Phoenix neighborhood, one solar panel can save, on average, seven dollars on energy costs. That probably doesn't sound like much, right? When you add it up, however, that's a savings of \$84 per year and, over the course of the panel's lifetime around \$2000. And that's assuming that power bills don't change over the next twenty years or so. Future changes could bring better savings. And, of course, if you install multiple panels, that's additional savings as well.

Tax Incentives

You've likely heard that you can get credit and reimbursement from your local and the federal government when you install solar panels and other sustainable energy tools. But how much money can you get? According to [Northern Arizona Wind & Sun](#),

"For systems put 'into service' between 2009 and 2016, the federal tax credit is 30%...In most of Arizona, you can also get a \$2.70 to \$3.00 per watt rebate from APS or SRP..."

"You may be able to take a credit of 30% of your costs of qualified solar electric property, solar water heating property, fuel cell property, small wind energy property, and geothermal heat pump property. This includes labor costs properly allocable to the onsite preparation, assembly, or original installation of the property and for piping or wiring to interconnect such property to the home."

Make Money

In addition to saving you money via your monthly bills and tax incentives, installing solar panels can also help you make money. In many places, especially those in perpetually sunny areas, solar panels take in more energy than the home will use and even beyond what the "reserve battery" can handle. When this happens, residents have the option of selling their "extra" energy back to the city for use on the municipal grid. How much you make through these sales is going to depend on where in Arizona you live. Some cities pay more than others.

Extra Savings

Solar panels that you fit onto your roof or set up in your yard are not the only way to take advantage of the sun's energy. Here are some other ways that solar power can help you save money on your power bills.

Solar powered lights: These are bulbs that you put in your outdoor lamps and light fixtures. They take in the sun's energy during the day and then use what they've stored to power themselves in the evenings. If you spend a lot of time in your yard, these bulbs can be an amazing money saver.

Solar chargers: These are solar cells that you can use to charge up a variety of devices. A lot of hikers and campers will carry these cells with them. A basic model can be used to charge a cell phone or a tablet. The expanded models can be used to power laptops and other appliances (depending upon the size of the cell configuration). These chargers start at about \$50 and you can definitely earn back that cost in savings over the cell's lifetime.

In addition to being useful outdoors, [these chargers are quite handy](#) for travelers of all stripes: imagine never having to find an outlet in the airport again!

As you can see there are multiple ways to save and profit from solar energy. Hopefully, you'll use these tips as incentives to solarize your own home!