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Leaderbrand Flips ‘On’ Switch To Power-Up New Owen Valley Winery Solar Capabilities

Despite Rain, Crowd Celebrates Symbolic Moment With Winery

by Michael Stanley
Staff Writer



A crowd of approximately 20 visitors came to the Owen Valley Winery last Saturday to mark the winery's addition of solar power capabilities. (Staff Photo)

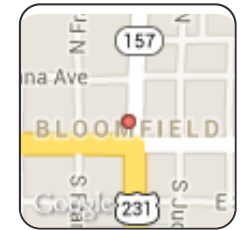
A crowd of more than 20 braved a rainy afternoon Saturday to celebrate the addition of renewable energy capabilities for the Owen Valley Winery, the only winery in the Midwest utilizing such technology.

The rural Spencer wine making operation of the Leaderbrand family recently secured grant funding through the Renewable Energy for America Program (R.E.A.P.) of the United States Department of Agriculture for the addition of solar panels. The winery received funds to help recoup installation costs for a new solar photovoltaic (PV) system through the local USDA Rural Development office in [Bloomfield](#).

“This isn’t just a celebration about the solar panels for me, this is an achievement that my father has been trying to accomplish ever since I was put on this planet. I know this is a major achievement for him personally and a winery that we all own,” Anthony Leaderbrand said. “It has been a fantastic experience working with Mann Plumbing and Solar.”

The 8.5 KW PV system installed by Mann Plumbing, Inc MPI Solar is expected to offset more than 65 percent of the winery’s annual

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electric load, saving the winery thousands of dollars over its projected 30 year service life, and will provide significant, long lasting environmental benefits for the winery and community as well. Each kWh of electricity produced by the system offsets about 1.74 pounds of climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). The system is projected to produce at least 12000 kWh per year for an annual offset of more than 20,000 pounds of GHG and a lifetime offset potential of more than 600,000 pounds of GHG over 30 years. The system will be monitored for 24/7 real-time and historic energy production accessible over the internet providing valuable educational and environmental information for the winery and the community.



Owen Valley Winery co-owner Preston Leaderbrand flips a ceremonial switch to activate the winery's new solar panels during an event to celebrate the green energy effort Saturday. (Staff Photo)



Anthony Leaderbrand

Mann Plumbing, Inc MPI Solar owner David Mann noted a positive experience more than a year in the making.

“This has been a real fun project for us, it’s always enjoyable to be involved in a business venture like this. One of the special parts about this project is that it’s funded by a grant from the Department of Agriculture for renewable energy,” Mann said. “It’s really satisfying to be able to participate in a program like that. Now we have a system out here that we think will hit about 60 percent of their electrical usage when the sun is shining really well. As their facility grows, it’s going to provide a little less, but they have plenty of room for expansion. We expect that whole system to last for at least 30 years.”

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