SOLAR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much would it cost to replace my electric bill with solar panels?

The average house in Benton PUD service territory uses 17,000 kWh per year. To replace your power bill would require 10.35 kW of solar panels which would require 52 200 watt solar panels. At an estimated cost of $9,000 to $11,000 per kW, the system would run between $93,000 to $114,000. Even with the system, the utility would still charge a monthly meter reading charge.

How much energy can a panel generate?

The panels vary in wattage based the quality of the cells, and are sold based on their wattage. The wattage of available panels range from around 150 watts to around 230 watts.

How big are solar panels?

The panels vary in size depending on the manufacturer, however, an average panel is approximately 2 ½ feet wide by 4 ½ feet tall and weighs approximately 35 pounds.

Does Benton PUD install Solar Panels?

No, Benton PUD does not install solar systems. Benton PUD provides and installs both the Production Meter and the Net Meter for the system.

Will Benton PUD pay for the electricity that is generated?

The customer can elect to either net meter the system where the energy generated is used against the customers electrical usage, or they can sell the energy back to the utility at the current listed wholesale rate (Schedule 90). The customer cannot do both.

Who installs Solar Panels in the Tri-Cities?

Benton PUD does not recommend any installer as a matter of policy. One source for installers is the web site http://www.solarbuzz.com/CompanyListings/UnitedStates.htm this site lists installers and dealers sorted by state.

Are there incentives available for installing solar systems?

Currently Benton PUD does not provide incentives for installing solar systems; however, there are Washington State incentives and Federal Tax credits available for those who qualify. For more information on state and federal tax credits available, visit the web site http://www.dsireusa.org/

How long will it take for a solar system to pay for its initial cost?

At current electrical rates, paying $11,000 per kW for the system and not taking into consideration any state or federal incentives, it would take 116 years for the system to pay for itself based on energy generated alone. (This does not take into account any changes in cost of electricity.)