



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD harnesses solar energy at Egan facility to reduce costs, carbon footprint

In seeking ways to reduce its electrical bill, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) recently installed solar panels at its Egan Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) in Schaumburg.

The Egan WRP solar panel system, the first of its kind at MWRD facilities, consists of 45 solar panels which focus sunlight on pipes containing a heat transfer solution. The heated solution is used to pre-heat water for boiler systems, and steam from the boiler systems is used for wastewater and solids treatment processes and to provide heating and cooling for the Egan WRP facilities.

Hiteshkumar Shah, Egan WRP assistant engineer of treatment plant operations, helped install 2,000 panel solar systems in India prior to working at MWRD. He explained that one of the main benefits of MWRD's new system is that it requires minimal maintenance.

"We just need to replace the solution every five to 10 years, and the system will produce enough energy to heat 42 gallons of water per hour, 24-hours per day, every day of the year," Shah said. "In fact, Egan's greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by 10.8 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year."

MWRD will monitor the operation and function of the solar panel system, and the resulting data will serve as the basis for future solar panel system projects at other MWRD facilities.

MWRD staff coordinated with city, county and state officials to obtain grant funding and install the equipment in December 2011, ahead of a Jan. 31, 2012 grant deadline.

"We are very enthusiastic about the energy savings that we expect to realize with the construction of the solar panels at Egan," said David St. Pierre, MWRD Executive Director. "There were many players that helped bring this project to reality within a relatively short time-frame. We appreciate the support of both the state of Illinois and city of Chicago, and I am especially pleased with the MWRD's team of engineers, pipefitters and electricians who all helped to bring this project to fruition."

MWRD received a \$102,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to fund the solar panel installation as part of the state's energy plan which aims to retool the Illinois economy, support development of green industry businesses and invest in renewable energy resources, energy efficiency, and green buildings. The DCEO is providing more than \$100 million in grants statewide, resulting in more than 12,000 green sector jobs being created over the next two years and leveraging almost \$1 billion in investments. In addition to the grant funding, the city of Chicago provided MWRD with 45 solar panels worth \$75,000.

More information about the State Energy Plan administered by DCEO's State Energy Office is at [www.ildceo.net](http://www.ildceo.net).



*The solar panel system is installed on the roof of the main building at the MWRD Egan WRP in Schaumburg. MWRD engineers (L - R) Scott Jones, Syed Haq and Hiteshkumar Shah explain how the system works to provide energy, reduce costs and decrease carbon dioxide emissions.*

Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwr.org](http://www.mwr.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.