

## Spotlight on Solar – Text Alternative

A woman with a striped button up shirt in front of a white background.

Annie: My name is Annie Pottorff and I'm a Sustainability Specialist at the City of St. Louis Park. More and more businesses and homes across the City of St. Louis Park are powered by solar.

Drone video of solar panels on a roof, filmed by All Energy Solar.

Annie: In recent years, technology advances, utility incentives, federal tax credits and local programs like the one here in St. Louis Park have made going solar more affordable than ever.

### Does solar work in Minnesota?

Annie: You might be surprised to learn that here in Minnesota, we get a similar amount of sunshine certain areas of Florida and Texas, meaning that even with our cold winters and lots of snow, solar can work just as well here as in southern parts of the United States.

The City of St. Louis Park also recently launched our Climate Champions Solar Bonus cost-share program where property owners can qualify for a partial reimbursement on the cost of solar if they make energy efficient upgrades first to their building.

### Why install solar?

Annie: Well, for either a home or business, it can reduce or even eliminate your electricity bills. Also, in the case of a power outage, installing solar with a battery backup will allow you to keep the lights on, which can be really beneficial for both homes and businesses. It will also increase your property values and decrease your carbon emissions. And finally, by enrolling in programs like Solar Rewards from Xcel Energy, you can even get financially rewarded for the solar energy that you produce.

Spencer Johnson, the founder of Sota Clothing, sits at his store with hats in the background.

Spencer: So I mean it was part environment, part since we were building owner, I felt like it was a smart investment. We make some hats here and we do other production stuff that kind of uses up a lot of power. So it's cut during the summertime, it's probably gone down by, you know, 75%.

Curt Rahman, a commercial property owner, stands in front of a brightly color exterior mural on his property.

Curt: So in addition to getting checks from Xcel every month instead of me having to pay them, what I've appreciated is the tenant response. The tenants are all interested in having a green building, working in a green building, and it does matter to them.

Luke Derheim, co-owner of The Block SLP, sits at his restaurant with a green backdrop.

Luke: So, this was our first install of solar between all six of our restaurants and bars in the Twin Cities. Two reasons for that were, number one, we had a great roof. And number two, there was an amazing incentive program from the city of St. Louis Park that also was a little bit more cherry on the top to really look at this program even further.

Spencer: So, working with St. Louis Park to get the solar installed and the rebates from there and the kickbacks were huge, you know, it was a very easy process, which is as a business owner is huge, you know, to make it easy.

Annie: Going solar can seem like a big undertaking and the initial price tag can seem really expensive. But there are lots of resources and programs to help bring the costs down.

First, there's a federal solar tax credit of 30%. Then there's also the City of St. Louis Park's Solar Bonus cost share program. Combining these, you can get up to 45% back on your solar investment.

### **What advice would you give?**

Luke: If you have roof space on your roof of your business and you're not considering this right now, why not? If we can have a sustainable long-term credit on our energy bill, everybody wins. So, I would highly suggest looking at it.

Curt: You need to get multiple quotes, take a look at all the different programs. If you've got a good southern exposure and a roof that's less than ten years old, the payback is less than ten years, and the panels are good for 25 years. So, you're just going to have free money after ten years.

A zoom out of a still photo of solar panels on a roof on a sunny day, shared by All Energy Solar.

Spencer: I love the fact that it's just up there running right now, and I don't have to do anything, you know, and it's working in our favor. And, just the connection piece, we were able to get two or three other businesses in this area to get solar. So, we're kind of building this little community of other businesses that are now rocking solar.

**Annie: If you're interested in going solar, but you're not really sure where to start, please reach out to the City of St. Louis Park Sustainability staff or go to our website.**

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