http://napavalleyregister.com/business/alpha-omega-of-rutherford-goes-solar/article_e9db5325-ab0f-50f4-8861-6463b7914815.html

Alpha Omega of Rutherford goes solar

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Bob McClenahan photo

Alpha Omega's five solar power arrays were architecturally designed to serve as shade structures for guest and employee parking and winery equipment.

Alpha Omega, a family-owned winery in Rutherford, has placed into operation a new solar system featuring a "fully integrated" solar and battery facility back-up power system.

"We were able to negotiate a lease using tax benefits to build a system where the lease costs are less than what our utility costs were," Alpha Omega proprietor Robin Baggett said.

The multi-million dollar microgrid system has already drastically reduced Alpha Omega's average monthly PG&E bill from $15,000 to $1,000.

"As such, after seven years, the lease will be retired and the system totally paid for at no net cost to us. Besides doing something good for our environment, the economics of this project also made tremendous sense. No one ever likes to talk about money, but we're willing to share what we've done and our costs in hopes that more people will follow suit."

This system, which includes solar power generation, energy storage and demand management, is the largest commercial microgrid system to date for a Napa Valley winery and in all of Pacific Gas and Electric Company's 70,000-square-mile service area in Northern and Central California, according to renewable energy developer Blue Sky Utility, which handled the project.

With the addition of electric vehicle charging stations expected later this fall, Alpha Omega, whose land and winery are Napa Green certified, continues to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and set the pace when it comes to embracing leading-edge renewable solutions, said a news release.

Alpha Omega's new microgrid system features Aquion Energy Inc. saltwater batteries, which contain no heavy metals or toxic chemicals.

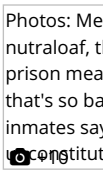
Alpha Omega estimates it will produce 640,500 kilowatt hours of clean, solar power and save 960,750 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, the equivalent of planting 2,402 trees.

The solar power system is designed to supply nearly 100 percent of the winery's energy needs, and the five arrays were architecturally designed to serve as shade structures for parking and winery equipment.

The solar structures also include a cantilevered crush-pad structure to provide shade and weather protection during harvest.

It will also provide motion-sensor lighting for those long production days at the winery, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

Currents



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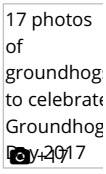

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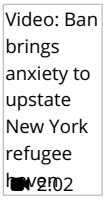
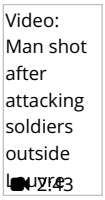
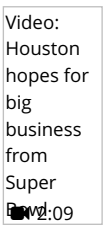


Video: Ban brings anxiety to upstate New York refugee haven



Video: Man shot after attacking soldiers outside Louvre



Video: Houston hopes for big business from Super Bowl

Video: UC Berkeley says small group behind protest violence