**Albany Library Moves Forward with Solar Panel Installation**

The Albertson Memorial Library in Albany, WI is moving forward with the installation of a solar panel array to supply a substantial amount of the library’s electrical power.

To start, the library is replacing the roof on the center section of the library. That project will begin in April, 2021 or as soon as weather permits. Shortly after the roof is completed, Full Spectrum Solar of Madison, WI will begin installing 72 Heliene Photo Voltaic Panels Model: 72M400-G1. These panels are manufactured in Mountain Iron, Minnesota.

Installing the solar panels will take 2-3 weeks. Then the operation of the panels will be tested and reviewed by building, electrical, and utility inspectors. Depending on the weather and availability of inspectors, the project is expected to be operational in June, 2021.

When fully operational, this solar array will supply the library with approximately 60% of its electrical use. Electricity is a major operational expense for the library. Installing solar panels will reduce the library’s operating expenses by over 10% and allow those funds to be used for other purposes.

The solar panels are an investment for the library. The electrical savings will pay back the library for the full cost of the installation in about 10-11 years. To some, that seems like a long time, but when compared to the return on other investments, it is quite good. The percentage return on investment of a solar installation of this kind is usually about 8 – 10% annually.

The initial cost of the solar panels is often a challenge for people and organizations wanting to install solar arrays. The Albertson Memorial Library is very fortunate to have this project supported by a gift from Mary Ann Sucharski, a former librarian in Albany; a grant from RENEW Wisconsin and its Solar for Good project; and Focus on Energy, Wisconsin’s energy efficiency and renewable energy services program.

In addition to the good economics of this solar project is its positive environmental impact. The library is proud to be setting an example by significantly reducing our carbon footprint with the installation of this solar array. Over the life of the system, 747 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) will be eliminated from the library’s footprint. That is equivalent to:

* Planting 17,405 trees.
* Reducing driving by 1,494,000 auto miles, or 76,194 gallons of gasoline.
* Recycling 2,361 tons of waste instead of sending it to landfill.
* Displacing CO2 emissions from the annual electric use of 85 homes.
* Reducing the amount of coal burned by 727,893 pounds (363.9 tons)

Watch for our future updates on how this project is progressing. Learn more about solar energy and careers in solar industries in future articles that we will be sharing.