

## Harnessing the sun's rays

News Tempe Campus

Phase I of ASU solar-power project complete



<sup>[1]</sup> Solar panels are on top the Apache Boulevard parking structure. The panels are part of phase I of a solar installation project by the University to increase the amount of generated solar power. (Erik Hilburn | The State Press)

A crowd of people in support of one of ASU's largest sustainability projects celebrated Tuesday morning on the rooftop of the Stadium Parking Structure at the Tempe campus.

Phase I of the solar installations project, or solarization, is complete. The project allows for about 1.9 megawatts of electricity for ASU that could power about 300 Arizona homes, said Morgan Olsen, the chief financial officer for the University.

"Today we're really celebrating the completion of ASU's solar phase one and looking forward to about quadrupling our total megawatts of solar power in phase two," Olsen said.

ASU will reduce its carbon footprint by around 5 million pounds of carbon dioxide because of the solar project, he said.

"That's also equivalent to removing about 435 automobiles from Arizona's roads," Olsen said.

He also said ASU is part of a large opportunity that solar energy offers.

"More energy from the sun hits the earth in one hour than is consumed [energy-wise] by all humans during the entire year, and we think that we're off to a very good start in terms of harnessing that opportunity," Olsen said.

President Michael Crow said he wants to lower the carbon footprint of ASU to a "position of neutrality."

He said he is the chairman of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which is a 700 college-and-university coalition that aims to reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere.

"We're only responsible for 3 percent of the carbon footprint in the country [as a group], but we're responsible for 100 percent of the student imprint," Crow said.

He compared the parking structure to a power plant because the solar panels produce energy.

"These solar cells up here are commercially state-of-the-art, but they're not the end of the line," Crow said.

He added that in the future, researchers need to find more efficient materials. ASU is part of an "intensive concentration in the area of discovery around renewable energy," he said.

Lee Feliciano, the executive vice president of CarbonFree Technology and founder of SolEquity, Inc., which are both solar-power development companies that merged in 2009, said phase I was completed in a "phenomenal" amount of time.

"We're the folks that put the pieces together and deliver the package," Feliciano said.

He said the project started in September and ended around Dec. 31.

Don Robinson, president of Arizona Public Service, said solar energy is one of the most

abundant resources in Arizona, and the available power needs to be harnessed.

“ASU understands the all-encompassing impact that energy policy has on the health and the financial vitality of a community and the need to work together to make that policy work,” Robinson said.

Since ASU is a large solar-power customer for APS, it has received reduced prices for the project, which Robinson said may be offered to others who are interested.

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