

Dear STARS Committee,

I am writing to affirm Grand Valley State University (GVSU) reached a renewable energy project partnership with their local utility after the Michigan Public Service Commission approved a Solar Garden program. This project was an innovative first in the state. The project is currently the largest solar panel installation in Michigan with 11,250 panels. The 3 megawatt solar garden was built on approximately 17 acres of university property in Allendale, Michigan. In this innovative partnership, GVSU agreed to subscribe for 500 kW.

One of the requirements that made this project unique was the stipulation that the program would develop educational opportunities to learn about solar energy. The parties agreed that the utility would provide \$55,000 up front for the design, procurement, and construction of smaller educational solar modules. The solar modules are used for educating students, community members and first responders that may encounter solar powered equipment in the event of an emergency. The utility also provides \$20,000 per year for six years towards solar educational course development.

With educational solar modules small enough to be relocated, yet large enough to provide measurable output, the ground work was laid for a unique real world learning experience. Students can collect data from the smaller educational modules and benchmark the data for future understanding of larger solar projects. The data will be used by many departments and courses including Biology, Engineering, Environmental, Natural Resource Management and Statistics.

One of the educational solar modules was built by GVSU engineering students on a flatbed trailer. The 'Solar on Wheels' is towed to various events such as k-12 science activities and First Responder Training seminars. Deployed, the 'Solar on Wheels' provides educational opportunities for both solar panels and shingles.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Respectfully,

Terry Pahl

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Energy Engineer for Grand Valley State University