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# Shepherdstown keeps going solar

March 14, 2014

Kelly Cambrel - Chronicle Staff , Shepherdstown Chronicle

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Shepherdstown resident Dan Conants newly formed nonprofit Solar Holler, is working to keep moving Shepherdstown in a Solar direction.

Conant returned to the area last summer after attending school out of state and began working with Than Hitt and members of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church on a innovative, solar financing project.

This could be a game-changer to make solar more accessible to churches and other nonprofits in West Virginia. Hitt said.

With the help of new technology provided by Green energy specialists at

Mosaic Power in Frederick, Md., the entire Shepherdstown community could be a part of financing the installation of solar panels for the popular downtown church, according to Conant.

As he explained, Mosaic Power has agreed to provide a small smart sensor remote control that monitors and efficiently manages the electricity powering the hot water heaters located in homes or commercial buildings.

The smart remotes provide greater energy efficiency for users, decreasing electricity costs and increasing savings.

These savings, once donated by participants, will provide of the funds necessary to complete the work of installing solar panels on the Presbyterian church, a longtime community goal.

Its a really interesting way for people to reduce their carbon footprint, and reduce their environmental impact from their own tank, and at the same time support this really cool solar project in town without just writing a check, he said.

Conant said that going solar, has been an interest of the church for many years, though they hadnt found an effective financing option.

Our congregation has become increasingly aware of the human factor in environmental damage and the human possibilities of reducing or eliminating such damage. Fifteen or so years ago we underwent an energy audit to learn how our building could be more efficient. At the time, solar panels were not on the menu. But when the opportunity came to utilize renewable solar power for ourselves and community, we were glad to take advantage, Pastor Randy Tremba said.

Conant, who has worked with churches and nonprofits and other community groups on similar ventures, said its his mission to provide these opportunities for progress.

The dream is we want to make it possible for anybody who has ever wanted to go solar to finally do it and we want to use this as way to build up a new clean energy industry in the state. he said.

After college I had to move away. I had to move out of state in order to work in this field and across the state were seeing so many folks in our generation, just flooding out of the state, he went on to say.

West Virginias always been an energy state. Thats what we do.

So it just makes sense to kind of, bring that into the 21st century,

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and finally start creating the opportunities thatll keep folks at home.

Solar Holler is seeking 100 homeowners and/or local businesses to participate in the Presbyterian Church project.

Installation for the remote is free and takes about 20 minutes total according to Conant.

Conant said he has been encouraged by the support that the project has already received. He said so far about 80 homeowners or businesses have signed up, though theres still room for more.

Its not a done deal yet. We do need support to make this happen.

Those interested in participating in the project can visit [www.solarholler.org](http://www.solarholler.org) to sign up.

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