

A New Bench Mark for Sustainable Buildings?

Solar phase finished at [Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens](#) expansion in Pittsburgh.

High-performance solar panels from SolarWorld, the largest U.S. solar manufacturer for more than 35 years, will provide electricity for the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Garden's Center for [Sustainable Landscapes](#). The project, rising in Pittsburgh's [Schenley Park](#), will drive ingenuity in sustainable architecture and engineering to new heights of achievement.

SolarWorld authorized installer Energy Independent Solutions has completed installation of 125 [kilowatts](#) worth of 250-watt Sunmodule™ solar panels – three-quarters on the roof, a quarter on the ground – to power the new, three-story educational, research and administrative center on the 118-year-old Phipps campus. Combined with energy efficiencies, [solar hot water](#), natural light capture, and geothermal heating and cooling, the [solar electric power](#) will help free the center from reliance on off-site energy.

Also independent from off-site water, the 24,350-square-foot Phipps center on a 2.65-acre park site will be the world's first project built to simultaneously meet or exceed the three most prestigious standards of sustainable construction: the International Living Future Institute's Living Building Challenge; the U.S. Green Building Council's highest level of certification, LEED® Platinum; and four-[star certification](#) of the SITES™ landscape rating system, also called the Sustainable Sites Initiative.

“This new feat of green building will stand as a model to prove we possess the know-how to construct buildings that do not drain the planet's energy resources,” said Kevin Kilkelly, president of SolarWorld Americas. “Solar power provides a perpetual, clean source of power on the site, exactly where energy demand will rise. [Solar technologies](#), energy efficiencies and engineering innovations work together to show how we can better use the resources already abundantly available at this site and in much of the rest of the world.

Furthering the project's sustainability, the solar installation has relied on domestic technology, equipment and labor. SolarWorld employs more than 1,100 Americans in manufacturing and selling the mono- and polycrystalline silicon solar panels in California and Oregon. Energy

Independent Solutions, based in McKees Rocks, Penn., provided installation expertise and labor. Mounting systems came from Solar FlexRack of Youngstown, Ohio. The \$24 million Phipps project is expected to be completed next spring.

“As the solar subcontractor, we were determined to use only the most reliable and domestically manufactured equipment – without compromise,” said Joe Morinville, owner of Energy Independent Systems. “We were determined to do our part the right way, tapping high-standard U.S. manufacturing, skill and labor.

Source: Solar World