

BIZ RULES

Prepare now for those 2012 solar energy rebates.



In July 2010, Florida Power & Light kicked off a five-year plan to offer rebates for residential and commercial properties transitioning to solar power. Within an hour, all of the available rebates for solar panels were claimed; the next year it took less than five minutes.

The program is mandated by the Florida Public Service Commission, and the \$2 per watt rebate is enough to save up to a one-time total of \$50,000 per meter for a 10-kilowatt system (big enough to power an average three-bedroom house or small business for about \$200 per month). Coupled with a 30-percent federal tax credit for solar energy, a business could save 70 percent of the installation costs. After three years of average energy use, the solar system has the potential to pay for itself.

Kirk Maust, co-founder and COO of Sarasota's Solar Direct, says businesses should start planning now for the 2012 rebates. To qualify, applicants

"The competition is fierce."

need to contact a solar company to analyze the property and energy usage, and prepare a contract and design a system; the contract can be contingent on receipt of the rebate. The solar company can also help with the process of signing up for the next round of rebates, which will begin this spring (the date has not been announced), or businesses can go directly through FPL once their contract is finalized. "All the prep work is what counts," says Maust. "The competition is fierce."

To apply for the next round of rebates, visit fpl.com/landing/solar_rebate ■

METRIC

25 million

The number of baby boomers (aged 48 to 66), who would like to start a business or not-for-profit in the next decade, according to a 2011 survey by Civic Ventures.

OVERHEARD

→ "Thirty percent of employers say they will opt out of [supplying health] insurance. I found that appalling."

—Sarasota Memorial Hospital CEO Gwen MacKenzie at the January Sarasota Tiger Bay luncheon, speaking about a McKinsey & Company survey of 1,300 employers that asked how many would continue to offer health insurance to their employees if the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act takes effect in 2014. To read about the survey, go to businessfinancemag.com/article/30-percent-employers-plan-cut-health-insurance-after-2014-0610.