

■ ENERGY: \$43,000 worth of panels could return \$110,000 in saving

# Solar lets entrepreneur plug into positive vibe

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For the Sudbury Star

For Forest & Lawn solar energy adviser Boris Iotsov, putting 26 solar panels on his roof at a cost of \$43,000, actually produced a "positive feeling."

With that kind of price tag, you can be forgiven for wondering if Iotsov has spent too much time in the sun.

The day after Forest & Lawn released a media advisory that it had signed an agreement with Toronto-based Grasshopper Solar Corporation, Iotsov invited *The Star* to check out the live installation of his new residential rooftop solar system.

Grasshopper Solar is an Ontario Power Authority approved Renewable Energy Technology Vendor, and the first solar power provider in Canada to carry the Better Business Bureau designation.

According to the advisory, Ontarians who take advantage of the Ontario Power Authority's Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) program get paid 80.2 cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity generated by their Grasshopper Solar System, or up to 64.2 cents for each kilowatt-hour their ground-mounted system generates.

In fact, anyone who owns a Grasshopper Solar System, depending on the size of their house and system, can earn between \$3,000 to \$250,000 per year.

Iotsov, 35, has worked for

Vale full-time as a geologist for the past four years and has owned his home since November 2007.

Iotsov said most people believe having solar panels on your home means you're "off the grid," which isn't actually the case.

"Most people don't realize there's a feed-in-tariff," he said as subcontractors from Coriveau Contracting & Restoration and Madden Electronics worked on his roof.

"Most people think whatever power you produce you'll use yourself, and whatever power generated left over you'll get credit for, that's not the case."

The power generated by the system on Iotsov's house is fed in to the local power grid.

There are two meters on the side of his house: one measures what the house generates, while the other measures what Iotsov uses.

"I'll see a 12.5% return on the investment over 20 years. It's a good return. The system will generate probably about three times what it cost."

Still, \$43,000?

"It'll generate something like \$110,000 over the next 20 years," Iotsov said with a grin.

Iotsov said while there is no government subsidy or incentive in place to encourage homeowners to purchase a residential solar power system, the payment per kilowatt and the return on the investment is incentive enough.



JOHN LAPPA The Sudbury Star

A workcrew prepares a roof in Lively for solar panels on Tuesday. See video at [www.thesudburystar.com](http://www.thesudburystar.com).

"I've always been interested in investing in alternative energy, but investing in it the traditional way, that is buying stocks or investments, hasn't always produced a great return.

"This type of investment opportunity is way more attractive."

Iotsov used to work in a consulting company in southern Ontario, and "would fly from Toronto here and there."

"I'd look down from the plane and see all these empty roofs with no use to them. So I thought to myself, 'why not put something on them we can actually use?'"

That's where the OPA's FIT

programs enter the picture. Asked how it felt to be part of green energy solutions, Iotsov said he felt good. "You're a power generator, it's a positive feeling." [editorial@thesudburystar.com](mailto:editorial@thesudburystar.com)