

REAP Grant Recipient Goes Greener

Idaho's First Solar Winery Adds More Sun Power for Residence

By Stacie Dagnes, Public Relations Strategist

(Moscow, Idaho) Over the roof top of the Camas Prairie Winery is the state's first solar winery installation to use rural development funds. Winery owners Sue and Stu Scott made a choice to reduce their carbon footprint by investing in a future of clean renewable energy. "It's the only planet we've got so keeping the water clean and not wasting fossil fuel is a good idea," Said Stu Scott

Brian Buch, Idaho's USDA Rural Energy Coordinator in Boise confirmed that, "The Camas Prairie Winery is the only Idaho winery to receive a USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant," Buch said. The \$90,000 project was partly funded by the 2008 REAP grant award, a federal tax credit, incentives from AVISTA- the regional utility-and the Scott's investments. USDA Coeur d'Alene office staff Margaret Hair helped prepare the REAP grant. When the 5,000 watt REAP solar system went online in April of 2009, it powered 22% of the wineries electrical needs

But the trailblazing Scott's didn't stop there. In December 2009 they added another 3,500 watt solar array to run their residence, located above the winery, in Downtown Moscow. "I wanted to see that the technology worked before investing in one for my household," said Stu Scott. The new residential system cost \$30,000 and is eligible for a 40% state tax credit, a \$2,000 federal tax credit and an Avista credit. "After rebates, the new system costs \$16,000, paying for itself in 8 years, based on a \$90 monthly savings," he said.

The Scott's innovative thinking keeps them on the forefront of change. In fact, even Stu Scott's approach to retirement is unconventional, "Now that I'm on the high side of 60 I'm interested in shifting the balance of my life. Now, time is more valuable to me than money," Scott said. He wishes to mentor a new owner in his award winning winemaking traditions and offer his green expertise.

"I didn't start out to be Idaho's greenest winery; it just happened that I found good business practices to also be good for the environment," he said. As small business owners the Scotts look for ways to increase efficiency and cut costs, while protecting the environment.

Tapping solar energy reduces the demand for coal-fired power, a source of greenhouse gas and mercury emissions, and the need to build new hydroelectric dams. Scott claims the new system produces on average 60% of his domestic power, "Currently it's producing 95% of my domestic power since I'm not air conditioning now," he said.

Scott championed other earth friendly practices. There's a natural gas tankless hot water system. Hot steam sterilizes equipment instead of chemicals like chlorine or iodine. Using inexpensive lightweight flat bottom bottles, cuts shipping costs and saves diesel fuel. In 2009 the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality recognized the winery as a Pollution Prevention Champion. "I'm proud that I can be both successful, profitable and a good environmental citizen," he said.

"My catalogue of 20 wines evolved over the years along with my skills," Scott said. "My classic Cabernet Sauvignon won 7 medals at the country's oldest and largest commercial wine judging, the Los

Angeles County Faire,” he said. Other award winners are the meads, dessert and reds--attributed to Paul Champoux's renowned vineyard in Washington's Horse Heaven Hills.

To pass on his green legacy, Scott is offering winemaking consulting for one year to teach the new owner his award winning secrets. Interested wine connoisseurs can learn the business from the ground up. Not only do they get a turn-key winery capable of producing over 5,000 gallons of wine yearly, included is a furnished tasting room and wine bar. The option exists to stay in the building or relocate. “Over the years I’ve learned from my own mistakes and the mistakes of others. I’ve seen many wineries come and go... I’d like to share what I’ve learned,” he said. “So here’s to the next generation. “

For readers who wish to learn how to go green, Scott has offered to answer questions about his solar projects and the REAP grant process. See the Solar Winery KLEW TV video on his website <http://camasprairiewinery.com/>. He can be reached at 208-882-0214 or email scottcamas@turbonet.com.

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