



Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor / Jack Lavin, Director

For Immediate Release
04/23/2003

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DCEO Helps Dedicate Solar Thermal System In Berwyn

BERWYN, IL – Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Jack Lavin today joined Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn and officials from the World's Largest Laundromat and Solar Service Inc., to dedicate a new solar thermal system installed on the roof of the laundromat in Berwyn.

"This is a shining example of how partnerships can help small businesses and consumers," Quinn said. "Developing 'All-American energy' sources like solar power creates jobs for Illinois workers and improves the environment as well."

The system was installed with a \$69,130 matching grant from the Renewable Energy Resources fund administered by DCEO's Bureau of Energy and Recycling. Money from the fund comes from fees collected by utilities statewide.

"This project demonstrates how, using solar technology, a business can harness the power of the sun to reduce energy consumption and operate a business more efficiently," said DCEO Director Jack Lavin.

The World's Largest Laundromat, which has been in business for 50 years, installed a solar thermal system designed to heat more than 1,200 gallons of water each day and over 300,000 gallons per year. The solar system is the primary supplier of hot water for the laundry, acting as a pre-heater to the existing water heater. The system will take cold water and heat it to 120° or greater, thereby reducing the need for conventional fuel. The system, which is maintenance-free and totally automatic, has a design life of over 30 years.

Tom Benson, owner of the laundry said, "The gas crisis of the winter of 2001 created an energy cost crunch that made me look for an alternative. Solar was by far the best way to go. Despite gas prices going up, my solar hot water system will enable me to maintain lower prices for my customers."

Solar thermal technology provides an environmentally friendly way to heat water for a business, or home in a cost-effective manner. These types of projects help reduce Illinois' dependence on fossil fuels while creating new business opportunities.

"Whether it is a laundromat, apartment building or single-family home, solar's time has come. It's not just affordable and reliable, it's available," said Brandon Leavitt, President of Solar Service Inc.

Based on DCEO calculations, which include all state and federal incentives, the project is expected to pay for itself in approximately 11 years.

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WORLD'S LARGEST LAUNDROMAT SOLAR THERMAL SYSTEM FACT SHEET

- System installed November, 2002
- Twenty-four 4' x 10' solar thermal panels (960 ft²)
- Three 200-gallon storage tanks (600 gallons total)
- Designed to produce over 1,200 gallons of hot water daily (average temp: 120°)
- Annual production (based on 70% performance) is over 300,000 gallons of hot water!
- System designed and installed by Solar Service Inc.

Solar Performance Example

February 20, 2003, 1:50pm, average outside temp 32°

36° – cold water inlet from city

111° – collector temperature

80° – bottom of solar tanks

107° – solar hot water temperature out to main water heater

125° – gas water heater output temperature setting

71° – solar contribution

18° – gas water heater contribution

[<-- Back to Index](#)

[<-- Close Window](#)