


Solar power helps light St. Paul RiverCentre ramp

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There's a very old source of energy lighting up the Saint Paul RiverCentre's parking ramp - sunlight. Today, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman joined U.S. Department of Energy Assistant Secretary Henry Kelly and Xcel Energy Regional Vice President Laura McCarten in dedicating a new 82-kilowatt solar photovoltaic installation on the side of the ramp.

The 348 American-made solar panels will generate enough energy annually to power nine homes for a year. The solar project is one of seven throughout the city funded by federal stimulus grant dollars.

Stimulus dollars are also funding two electric-vehicle charging stations, as well as a solar-thermal project completed earlier this year on the roof of the actual RiverCentre. Over 1,000 lights in the parking ramp have been converted to energy-efficient fluorescent lamps, saving \$50,000 annually.

The overall goal is to reduce the "carbon footprint" at the RiverCentre, the Roy Wilkins Auditorium and Xcel Energy Center by 80 percent, and make the facilities 20 percent more efficient than average by 2012.