

Solarized! Cool City Committee continues making Godfrey greener

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
December 7 2016 11:17 AM



GODFREY - The **Village of Godfrey** continues to become greener with the help of a committee led by **Nathan Keener**.

Keener is the careperson of the **Godfrey Climate Protection and Energy Efficiency Committee**. That committee is appointed by the mayor and village trustees. Keener said

the committee's mission is to "engage diverse village stakeholders to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainability." Most recently, the committee spearheaded the **Solarize Godfrey** program, which resulted in 14 homes and businesses in Godfrey installing solar energy. Keener said this equated to as many as 190,000 kilowatt-hours being produced annually. To put that number in perspective, the average Illinois household uses as many as 9,000 kilowatt-hours a year.

That program was utilized through Missouri-based solar energy provider, **Straight-Up Solar**. Through the program, Godfrey residents and business owners were invited to utilize the power of group purchasing to install solar energy. Through informal informational meetings called "**Power Hours**," Keener and representatives from Straight-Up Solar were able to give interested parties a presentation about the possible savings and benefits solar energy could give them. As many as 120 people attended those 10 Power Hours, Keener said.

"Through the group buy program, solar started at 15 percent cheaper than the April 2016 market," Keener said. "We also let people know of the 30 percent federal tax credits as well as multiple state incentives and grants."

One of those incentives came from the Village of Godfrey itself, which offered businesses either a 10 percent credit or \$3,000 toward going solar, whichever amount was less. Keener said Godfrey is one of a handful of municipalities in Illinois providing its own incentives for businesses to switch to solar energy.

"We were really proud that the Village of Godfrey offered their own incentives as well," he said. "We were really proud of that, because local communities don't usually give incentives. Godfrey is maybe one of three in the state to do it."

Solarize Godfrey began in the spring of 2016 and was inspired by a similar program in Champaign County. It officially ended on Sept. 30. Those who wanted to take advantage of the program, yet were still working out proposals for installation were given until Nov. 1. Keener said a similar initiative may be in the works for next year, but no final decisions have been made.

The Godfrey Climate Protection and Energy Efficiency Committee meets on the second Monday of every month at 10 a.m. Meetings are open to the public. Keener said the committee is composed of environmentally-conscious citizens of the community.

Besides the Solarize Godfrey program, Keener said the committee has also helped push an efficient lighting upgrade throughout the village and is drafting an overarching sustainability plan, which includes a greenhouse gas inventory produced by the village. An intern from **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE)** helped create the

inventory compiling the amount of carbon produced by village-owned and operated properties. Keener said that inventory will soon be released for public viewing.