

Meadowlands Commission Lauded for Solar-Farm Plan

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NORTH ARLINGTON -- Plans to install solar farms on landfills earned the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission a 2009 Green Policy Award from the New Jersey chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

The award recognizes the commission's commitment to cut energy consumption and fight global warming through green and sustainable energy policies.

The commission wants to develop what would be the state's largest solar-power facility, a 5-megawatt solar-panel farm on the Erie landfill in North Arlington. The project at the 42-acre landfill might also include recovery of methane, a greenhouse gas produced in landfills as garbage decomposes. It can be captured and used to produce electricity.

The 5-megawatt solar-power farm could produce enough energy to supply electricity to about 600 New Jersey homes a year, according to calculations by the state Board of Public Utilities.

Among other green initiatives, last year the Meadowlands Commission opened a Center for Environmental and Scientific Education, a building considered green because of the energy-efficient details in its design. The center gives local governments and businesses an example of how to incorporate green building practices in their own projects. It also has classrooms where students can learn how the building works to be energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

The commission has also published several sets of green guidelines to help developers and towns identify ways to cut energy consumption and reduce pollution.

"The NJMC takes great pride in its efforts to foster a more sustainable Meadowlands, and we are honored to be recognized by the USGBC as a leader in green policy," said Joseph Doria, chairman of the Meadowlands Commission and commissioner of state Department of Community Affairs.

The USGBC is a national non-profit group that aims to promote green building technology.

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