

As soon as I knew that renewable energy was an option, I was on board 100%. Green Mountain Energy's 100% Wind Plan, sign me up whatever the premium! This was part of my post 9/11 "make the world a better place" strategy, which also ignited my quest to find what needed bettering. Among many things, I learned that climate change and environmental degradation were real and serious. This is where I focused my efforts.

Jon and I moved in 2011 to a home with terrific solar potential. Slowly, we made our home as energy efficient as possible before we really began to consider adding solar panels. We added attic insulation and installed a radiant barrier and replaced our old windows. As the incandescent light bulbs burned out one by one, we replaced with LEDs. We even hang our clothes on the clothesline to dry. We decided to wait on upgrading the old 10 SEER AC unit until it was on its last leg.

In 2015 Jon and I took the plunge and installed a 11kW system through Solar City (now owned by Tesla). There were no upfront costs. Through a power purchase agreement plan we were able to lease the panels. We pay Tesla \$0.12/kWh of production which turns out to be about \$100.00/month. Net metering is through MP2 Energy. With MP2 we accrue a credit for any unused solar, but the credit resets each December. During months of lower solar production or no solar credit, we end up with an electric bill.

On average our system produces 13,000 kWh of solar energy annually. Our home electricity usage is about 16,500 kWh per year, offsetting around 80% of our electricity from the grid with solar.

December 2019, Jon and I purchased a 4kW system to add to our existing panels. This new system produced 5000kWh of solar energy over the past 12 months. We finally hit 106 % offset! Well, I assumed that reaching this new milestone was a result of the added panels.

Interestingly, when I did some investigating, I learned that our electricity usage decreased to 10,400 kWh for 2020. We finally had to replace that old 10 SEER AC unit in May 2020. We installed a 16 SEER unit that made all the difference.

In hindsight we did not need to add the 4kW system. We just needed to upgrade our old and inefficient AC unit. The big "icing on the cake" is that with the extra panels, we are at 125% offset. We effectively no longer pay and electric bill except for Tesla's lease fee. I guess one could say that Jon and I are cleaning up the grid for free. I like to think that we are improving our carbon footprint even more.