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Historic Cincinnati Manufacturer Expands Innovative Use of Solar Power

Osborne Coinage/Doran Mfg, LLC Add Third Solar Energy System from Third Sun Solar

ATHENS, OHIO—Osborne Coinage is America's oldest private mint. Custom coins, casino tokens, amusement tokens, key chains and medallions, and promotional minted materials are all produced at their Cincinnati facilities. Osborne's skilled engravers, die setters, and mint craftsman create designs for custom commemorative coins in aluminum, brass, nickel-silver, bronze, and even fine silver.

And this historic company, which minted commemorative coins for Abraham Lincoln's 1860 campaign, now uses clean solar power to supply a good portion of their electricity.

Osborne Coinage and its sister company, Doran Manufacturing, a producer of heavy-duty truck and off-road construction and mining vehicle tire pressure monitoring systems, both see a high electrical energy demand, particularly during specific parts of the day. A key objective of implementing energy efficiency upgrades and installing PV solar was to reduce and offset their electricity consumption. The long-term goal was to install as much solar capacity as possible on the property and offset as much energy usage as feasible.

Once the owners installed their first solar array in 2009, and saw its performance exceed their expectations, they moved forward with two subsequent expansions of the original system.

- Initial system: 45.14 kW, October 2009
- Expansion system: 51.92 kW, July 2010
- Expansion system: 59.36 kW, January 2012

The initial solution was to deploy high-efficiency SunPower solar panels on two adjacent building rooftops. This ballasted installation required no roof surface penetrations—the panels remain in place by virtue of the aerodynamic design of the racking and ballast weight added to the rack structures. Even with the ballast weight, the roof loading is low, at only 4 pounds per square foot.

Once the business owner/managers saw the positive effect that solar was having on their utility bills, they came back for more. The direct benefits they realized with their first system, and expanded upon with their subsequent systems, include:

- Systems are projected to supply 30% of energy usage
- Each ~50kW system has reduced peak demand by about 16kW
- Systems are expected to reduce electric cost by 50% including SRECS
- Estimated 3 - 4 year return on investment on the first two systems with Ohio incentive. Estimated 5 – 6 year investment on third system
- Huge tax savings and significant income from SRECS
- System Production has returned 107% of predicted energy production

During the time the first two solar energy systems were designed and installed, a state grant program in Ohio provided 50% of the system costs. That program is now retired, replaced by a smaller, more complex low-interest loan program. Such programs vary from state to state and tend to shift over time. But a 30% federal tax credit remains in place, as well as an accelerated depreciation schedule.

Remarkably, Osborne and Doran have seen a significant decrease in demand charges due to their solar energy system—which is not always the case with solar. Since demand charges make up a sizeable portion of a typical commercial energy bill, the ability to leverage a solar system’s production to achieve demand shaving can provide additional payback on top of the expected energy savings. According to Third Sun Solar project developer, John Fanselow, “the key to shaving peak demand charges lies in ensuring that the customer’s electric demand profile consistently matches the daily solar production profile.” Through implementation of energy efficiency measures, energy management technologies and careful consideration of their work schedules, Osborne Coinage has been very successful in doing just that.

About Osborne Coinage and Doran Manufacturing

Osborne Coinage is one of the few private mints in the world making custom coins, casino tokens, amusement tokens, key chains and medallions, and promotional minted materials. Throughout history, Osborne coins, tokens and medallions have been significant artifacts of U.S. culture. Osborne minted the 1860 presidential campaign medals for Abraham Lincoln's campaign, and for eight other presidential candidates through the years. During World War II, Osborne minted 5 billion food ration tokens for the U.S. government. Each year, Osborne mints millions of doubloons for the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and has minted more transportation tokens than any other private mint, including the 100 million tokens once used by the New York City subway system. Doran Mfg, LLC produces tire pressure monitoring systems for over-the-road, refuse, hazardous waste, and off-road mining trucks. The largest mining truck in the world, which can carry 470 cubic meters of coal at the North Antelope Rochelle Mine in Wyoming, uses a Doran tire pressure system.

About Third Sun Solar

Based in Athens, Ohio, Third Sun Solar is a fast-growing design/build solar firm serving Ohio and the surrounding states. An Inc. 5000 company in 2009, 2010 and 2011, Third Sun Solar is at the forefront of the emerging clean energy industry—a growing resource for 21st-century Ohio jobs. For more than a decade, the company has custom designed and installed over 300 solar energy systems for its commercial, institutional, government, and residential customers across the Midwest. Third Sun Solar employs a team of NABCEP-certified solar energy system installers along with design engineers, financial analysts, grant specialists, and support staff, all focused on making it easier for customers to go solar. The company combines financial and management experience, multiple installation crews, a network of professional services partners, and advanced internal systems to deliver a smooth transition to solar energy at any scale.