

MEET YOUR SOLAR INSTALLER MAINE SOLAR SOLUTIONS, FREEPORT, MAINE

George Harvey

One thing we can say confidently is that there always is something going on at Maine Solar Solutions (MSS).

We at *Green Energy Times* have been watching for several years as MSS has been building its business, and we have found it increasingly exciting. Our last article on the company, "Maine Solar Solutions Partners with Habitat for Humanity," was in the October 2022 issue (<https://bit.ly/GET-MSS-and-HH>).

The partnership provided a solar system to a home in Kennebunkport, with the panels and installation donated by Maine Solar Solutions.

The donation of time and materials happened because Sam Zuckerman, owner of MSS, wanted to "give back" to the community he had been serving for ten years. If more people followed that ethic, the world would be a better place.

Using numbers provided by Zuckerman, we can take a look at what happened at MSS in 2022, and what we see is impressive. MSS received 4,480 customer inquiries about solar in 2022. That is a 77% increase from the previous year. Based on these, their solar consultants went on 2,253 site assessments, up 87% from 2021. MSS gained 609 new jobs in 2022, which was an increase of 79%, year over year. It installed 441 rooftop arrays



Sam Zuckerman of Maine Solar Solutions. (Jason A. Frank Photography)

and 26 ground-mounted systems. It also installed 87 Tesla Powerwalls along with various other types of work.

Clearly, MSS is not just growing, it is burgeoning. There are reasons for that, and we might look at what some of them are.

To start with, MSS is really interested in being certain that the customer does understand all the available options. Zuckerman told us, "Our goal has always been to educate our customers so they can make informed decisions." In fact, not only is there a lot of information at the MSS website, mainsolarsolutions.com, but more is coming. MSS offers pricing information now, and we are told that it

will soon have a tool that allows potential customers to get ideas for themselves of what their specific installation might cost. And a visit to the site during business hours brings up a window for a potential customer to chat with a solar advisor.

When MSS designs a system for a customer, it typically presents a set of three or four options for the design. There are different ways a specific system could be optimized. For example, customers should be able to decide whether they want the greatest amount of electricity for a particular site or the most effective use of their investment.

Choices of what panels to use are also presented. One that is often considered is the use of black panels versus standard. Many people prefer the appearance of black panels, but they do tend to cost a bit more.

MSS installs batteries for both grid-tied and off-grid applications. The choice of batteries depends on the use, with SimpliPhi or Rolls AGM batteries used for off-grid, and Tesla batteries commonly used for grid-tied. One new battery is the Tesla Powerwall Plus, which has a battery with an inverter and controller. For most batteries, SolarEdge inverters are used.

MSS only serves Maine, but it does work to provide solar systems for homes, businesses, industrial operations, municipal sites, and non-profits. Maine is a

place where solar power is growing fast. As it happens, the area of Maine that MSS does most of its work has not been having the difficulties that are reported by other installers getting approvals elsewhere in the state.

With the fast growth in demand, MSS has had to increase its staff. It now has 48 employees, making it quite possibly the largest installer dedicated to working in its state.

Zuckerman's view of the future of solar power in Maine is worth considering. Some areas of the state have disadvantages because of old transmission infrastructure. The fact that some of the state's utilities are owned by investors does not help this situation, because the investors' goals are rather strictly profit-driven. In contrast to this are a number of smaller utilities that are operated as customer cooperatives, which make their decisions based primarily on quality of service and need. Zuckerman says the relatively low level of difficulty his business experiences is because the areas where it does most of its work are in the latter group.

One way or the other, the amount of our electricity coming from renewable resources is increasing. And Maine Solar Solutions is a fast-growing part of that story.

The Maine Solar Solutions website is mainsolarsolutions.com. ♻️



Solar trackers at Pooch Corner Farm. (Maine Solar Solutions)



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Replenoa Farm's solar array consists of 59 panels producing about 31,600 kilowatt-hours of electricity in its first year of operation. This reduced carbon emissions by 48,938 pounds. (Replenoa Farm)



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