

News

Sunny job outlook: Isles offers training on solar panel installation

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Isles' Center for Energy and Environmental Training (CEET) is holding its first hands-on solar panel installation course, preparing unemployed and underemployed New Jersey residents to enter the solar installation field.

Courses are happening at Isles' newly renovated training facility at 33 Tucker St. in Trenton, the organization's home for its Youth Build Institute and CEET.

"Participants in this first solar course have the benefit of observing the actual installation of a photovoltaic solar panel array on the roof of our building," said Jeanne Oswald, who runs the job training center for Isles.

"This experience of guided observation is followed by formal online, classroom and hands-on training."

Isles Inc. is a 28-year-old community development and environmental organization based in Trenton. With a long-standing mission to foster self-reliance in healthy, sustainable communities, Isles developed the green job training center last January, complementing the nonprofit's ongoing commitment to the environment and local development. Isles' CEET began training eight months ago in the residential energy efficiency field. They are now expanding into renewable energy as well.

"We're excited to see our longer term plans coming to fruition. This helps workers, businesses, the environment and Trenton neighborhoods. Our work should spur other building owners in the region to follow suit, fueling more green jobs for those who need them the most," said Marty Johnson, president and founder of Isles.

"We are especially grateful to South Jersey Industries, Sunpower, New Jersey's Clean Energy Program, and our other partners for their support and commitment to a green environment and stronger local economy."

The solar class is a collaborative effort with SunPower Corporation, an international leader in solar technology; Jersey Solar; and Sun Electric, a licensed electrical contractor.

"We applaud Isles' efforts to train and place highly motivated, underemployed workers into the rapidly growing solar industry," said Tom Leyden, managing director of SunPower's East Coast office in Trenton.

One student called this Isles initiative a chance of a lifetime.

"A solar career path has been an interest of mine for quite a long time, and Isles is allowing me to see my dream come true at a time in my life when I needed the help most," John Cross said.

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