

Westford Solar Park Sees The Light Of Day

The 22 acre project is now the largest privately owned solar plant in Massachusetts.



All photos - Credit [Andrew Sylvia](#)



Cathartes Private Investments Principal Jim Goldenberg.

It was only fitting that the sun was shining as the Westford Solar Park celebrated its unveiling earlier this week.

The project, which when fully completed will produce 4.5 megawatts over 22 acres of land near Route 3, has helped create 50 jobs in Westford and was developed in a partnership between the state, the North Andover-based renewable energy company Nexamp, and Cathartes Private Investments.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs secretary Richard Sullivan was on hand to praise the new park, which he hopes such as help stem the \$22 billion the Commonwealth sends out of state for energy costs.

"Through successful public-private partnerships like this one with Cathartes and Nexamp, the amount of solar power installed in Massachusetts has soared in recent years – going from 3.5 megawatts when Governor Patrick took office to more than 60 megawatts today," said Sullivan. "Massachusetts is in the midst of a solar revolution, and we are well on our way to the Governor's goal of 250 megawatts of solar power by 2017.

The field of solar panels was also a welcome sight to Westford town planner Angus Jennings, who hopes that the town can create new bylaws that help lure renewable energy plants like these to town.

"(This is) really on a scale you don't often see. Usually non-residential development happens in locations that occur in locations that are more visible in areas that don't have the land area that this project has," said Jennings. "It's also very exciting because there's no negative impact whatsoever, it's entirely a plus.

It's renewable energy, there's no infrastructure concerns, traffic and noise can often be concerns on industrial zoned land."

Jennings wouldn't say that the plant, which is currently the largest privately owned solar plant in Massachusetts, makes Westford the state's renewable energy leader. However, State Representative Jim Arciero (D-Westford) does believe that the project symbolizes that Westford wants to take the lead in the Commonwealth when it comes to renewable energy.

"I am proud that Cathartes Private Investments and Nexamp have partnered to create the largest privately-owned solar project in Massachusetts which will be located in Westford," said Arciero. "This facility will not only create clean, environmental-friendly energy for consumers, but will improve the local economy by creating new jobs."

Prices for production of solar energy have dropped according to Cathartes principal Jim Goldenburg from \$10 a watt in 1990 to \$1 today and expected parity with the costs per watt for other energy sources by the end of the decade.

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