
Powering UVM

Solar trackers installed for the Aiken Center

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The projects undertaken by the Clean Energy Fund (CEF) continue to strive toward making UVM as environmentally conscious as possible.

Seventeen solar trackers were installed at 405 Spear St. to supply the electrical power of the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources (RSENR), according to the Burlington Free Press.

"Rubenstein School students initiated this project with the support of faculty members because of their commitment to renewable energy, a lower carbon footprint and a more sustainable world," Dean of RSENR Mary Watzin said.

The solar trackers will generate 95,880 kilowatts/hour annually, providing for 23.9 percent of the electricity consumed by the Aiken Center and for 30.0 percent of the total energy costs, green building coordinator Michelle Smith said.

Renewable energy sources provide a quarter of the total electricity of the Aiken Center, Smith said.

The CEF committee funded the solar trackers after reviewing a proposal made by the committee in the fall of 2009, she said.

The Aiken renovation project is aiming for a platinum level of certification from the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED), a standardized green building system by the U.S. Green Building Council, Smith said.

"The project is able to achieve three points toward the platinum level, 52-69 total points required, by providing at least 17.5 percent of the building's total energy use through the use of on-site renewable energy systems," she said.

Though the completed Aiken Center will have a LEED gold building rating, the end goal is to reach the LEED platinum rating, according to the RSENR website.

By achieving this rating, the Aiken Center will be one of the nation's greenest renovated buildings,

the RSENR website stated.

"The renovated Aiken Center will be a harbinger of a sustainable future, a 'Green Beacon' for the University and Burlington communities and their visitors," the RSENR website stated.