

## **Santa Clara creates one-stop, speedy process for solar home projects**

Santa Clara, Calif., has instituted a one-stop process so residents applying for permits to install rooftop solar panels can get final approval in a day to start construction and interconnect. The innovative permitting method means residents can more quickly get their systems operating and receive cash rebates from Silicon Valley Power, the municipal electric utility said yesterday.

"We've simplified the entire process," said Sheila Lee, building official for Santa Clara. "The building permit and utility interconnection reviews and approvals happen over the counter at City Hall. The interconnection review process by SVP has been eliminated and is being handled by the Building Department. What used to take weeks can now be done in a single visit."

"We believe this is the only expedited process in the state utilizing a one-stop combined building permit and utility interconnection approval for simple residential systems," said Larry Owens, SVP customer service manager. Solar installations usually provide payback for a homeowner's investment in six to eight years, utilizing SVP rebates and savings in electricity costs, the utility said.

Santa Clara's new process is a "model municipal utility solar solution that should be copied at the regional, state and national levels," said Doug Payne, executive director of SolarTech, a solar power initiative of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. —

[ROBERT VARELA](#) 4/20/10