Solar Photovoltaic Systems

A solar photovoltaic (PV) system is a type of renewable generation system (RGS). Systems such as solar panels and related equipment allow power to be harnessed from the sun to produce electricity for the home or business. Installation of an RGS can help reduce the amount of power purchased from an electric provider.

Net Metering

The LCEC Net Metering program allows LCEC customers with an approved renewable generation system (RGS) to offset all or part of their energy use. To offset energy use, the output from the PV system must be used downstream of the meter where it is connected. Electricity generated from a PV system reduces monthly electricity bills. If more energy is produced monthly it can be banked. LCEC provides a credit for banked energy on an annual basis.

Selling electricity to LCEC

Excess energy is sent to the grid and is accumulated and banked to be drawn upon as needed to offset future energy use from LCEC. For billing cycle months January through November, credit for banked generation will be carried forward for use in the following billing month. In the last billing cycle of each calendar year, all banked energy will be trued up and result in a credit on the electric account or a check to the customer. Note that the installed RGS system cannot exceed 90 percent of the utility distribution service rating at the location.

Net metering rates

The Net Metering rate is in accordance with the LCEC Rate Schedule Net Metering Rider. Energy generated by the customer, will be deducted from the energy delivered by LCEC. The net energy will be utilized for the billing calculation. Any energy banked will be carried forward as a credit to the end of the calendar year, and payable at the avoided wholesale power cost. Customers are responsible for the minimum customer charge to support the cost of infrastructure needed when not generating their own energy. All taxes, governmental fees, and power cost adjustments apply. In addition, a kW demand charge may apply.

Excess energy payment

Excess energy banked is paid at the calculated avoided wholesale rate for the prior year. This rate varies from year to year and is less than the retail rate. It is recommended that RGS systems produce at least the amount of energy used during a year.

How net meters are read

The reading on the inverter is the total energy generated. The PV system is connected to the main service panel and appliances or loads that run concurrently will consume a portion or all of the energy generated. Any energy not used is excess energy and will be banked and sold to LCEC. The bidirectional meter measures energy coming out of the home or business (RC), energy going in (DL) and the net energy flow (NT).

Installation

A PV system can be installed after applying for a permit from local government and an inspection. Systems can be installed on the roof or on the ground. A licensed contractor/installer can advise on the number of panels and the cost of a system. Be sure to consider cost/benefits when deciding on a system.

LCEC must be notified of any RGS tied into the electric grid and a net metering application and interconnection agreement is required before installation of the bidirectional meter and parallel operation begins.

LCEC does not offer rebates or incentives for the purchase of an RGS. Incentives could potentially increase rates and would be subsidized by those not receiving benefits.

Where to start

1. Conduct research to evaluate systems and vendors.
2. Review the LCEC Net Metering Guidelines
3. Complete a net metering application and interconnection agreement.
4. Apply for local government permitting and inspection.
5. Once installed, provide inspection documentation to LCEC.
6. LCEC will install a bidirectional meter and provide the OK to operate your new system.

https://www.lcec.net/energy-efficiency/net-metering-program