



One of six solar trackers installed outside Daniele Inc. in Burrillville.
(Tim Faulkner/ecoRI News)

First Pivoting Solar Trackers Installed in R.I.

By TIM FAULKNER/ecoRI News staff

BURRILLVILLE — Solar trackers aren't new, but they are beginning to take hold in the region. Rhode Island installed its first dual-axis, fully pivoting, commercial-scale trackers last week as part of massive new additions to a local food processing company. In all, six tracking systems with 24 solar panels each are poised to start generating power by the end of October.

"This is significantly beneficial for Rhode Island," said Anthony Baro, managing principal of Providence-based [E2SOL](#), the developer of the solar project.

The solar trackers, each about the size of a medium-sized tree, are rated to produce 43 kilowatts of power. Because of the trackers' ability to follow the path of the sun, the system generates enough kilowatt hours of electricity for about six homes. Baro anticipates that the sleek, innovative panels will inspire other tracker projects in the region — a phenomenon known as the "popcorn effect."

These solar panels, situated at the entrance to a large addition underway at [Daniele Inc.](#), pivot according to daily and seasonal weather information provided by three satellites. The tilting allows the panels to generate between 30 percent to 45 percent additional electrical output than traditional fixed-solar arrays. The feature helps solar panels deliver a quicker payback on investment, according to developers. They require less space than comparable solar fields, making them ideal for densely built areas.

There also is less sunshine in the Northeast than in many other regions of the country.

"The sunny season is so short everybody is trying to make the most of it," said Mark Klonicke, field technician for Vermont-based [All Earth Renewables](#), the manufacturer of the trackers. The company is considered a New England success story, having manufactured and installed more than 2,250 solar-tracker systems across the country.

Klonicke said solar trackers have become an attractive investment in recent years, as the energy produced by solar panels has nearly doubled while prices have dropped dramatically.

The \$266,468 solar array received a \$54,000 grant from the state's Renewable Energy Fund. The project is expected to be a precursor to others at and around the new \$50 million, 300,000-square-foot building. Daniele Inc. is a large producer of dry-cured meats such as prosciutto, pancetta and chorizo.

Source: <http://www.ecori.org/renewable-energy/2014/10/3/first-pivoting-solar-trackers-installed-in-ri.html>