

An Award for Transfiguring Energy

Transfiguration Catholic Church was selected to receive the 2011 City of Oakdale commercial property "Acorn Award - Green Category" for environmental sustainability. The award was given to the parish for its installation of a large solar panel array. Deacon Glenn Skuta received the award on behalf of the parish at the November 22 City Council meeting. He also participated in a city workshop that led to the city deciding to install solar panels on city hall in 2012.

Following in the footsteps of the Vatican, which installed solar panels three years ago, Transfiguration signed a lease with Minnesota company Solarflow Energy for a 40 kilowatt solar photovoltaic installation. The 210 solar panels, manufactured by tenKsolar of Bloomington, MN, were installed on the roof at the south end of the building in late 2010.

The solar array generates on average of 10-15% of the parish's electricity needs, saving money and cutting pollution emissions. There are plans for an interactive solar learning center with real-time analysis of the systems performance that will serve as a teaching tool for parish members and be integrated into the school's science curriculum.

The project is the latest success of the parish Creation Care Team which started over three years ago to help the parish and parishioners follow the Catholic Social Teaching principal of being good stewards of God's creation.

The project was made possible by Solarflow Energy through a partnership with Xcel Energy who partially provided funding through a grant from the Renewable Development Fund. Legal Assistance in negotiating the creative lease arrangement was provided by the law firm of Stoel Rives in Minneapolis.

The project requires no capital investment by Transfiguration and will save an estimated \$45,000 in electricity costs over the course of the 18-year lease term. In addition, it will offset Transfiguration's attributable carbon dioxide emissions by up to 50 tons per year.

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