

# Renewable energy at your fingertips



The Renewable Energy Technology Center in Windsor, Ontario

Photos (2): Green Sun Rising Inc.

Renewable energies for everyone: in April the Renewable Energy Technology Center opened in Windsor, Ontario to demonstrate the advantages of green energy to the public.

**W**e established the center as a learning and education center for the community," explains Robin Easterbrook, Executive Director of the RET-Center. The center opened in August 2009, and in a sign of the times, converted a 3,300 square foot shuttered part of the old Windsor Tool & Die factory in central Windsor, to showcase the best in renewable technologies – with a focus on solar technologies. Green Sun Rising Inc. and scn energy America Inc., joined forces and within a matter of months developed the center from a simple warehouse showroom displaying publicly and commercially available solar products, to a community-based institute for understanding sustainability and renewable energy.

**Klaus Dohring (centre), President of Green Sun Rising, explains the functionality of a showcase solar PV module at the RET-Center.**



The open-door policy at the RET-Center means anyone who stops in can learn how solar photovoltaic technology works – simply put; how the power of the sun can be used to power a home or business. It's a hands-on learning experience. All the necessary hardware and components for setting up solar PV systems are on-site, provided by scn energy America, a division of scn Energy.

The center is in the progress of installing a solar PV demonstration system, so the public can see a functioning solar power system up close. Visitors also learn how the Ontario Government's recently enacted Green Energy Act and its feed-in tariff programme allows anyone in Ontario to become their own private power company.

## Shining a light on solar thermal

The RET-Center also showcases the highly-effective power of solar thermal technology. The center's second partner company, Green Sun Rising Inc., has installed a solar thermal system with roof-mounted solar collectors.

Behind these technologies stands a team of highly-educated and motivated employees from both partner companies. From a newly-developed 1,500 square foot administrative office, the team designs systems to suit client's needs. The attached classroom facilities provide a place for the center to further carry out its mission of educating the public about renewable energy technologies.

Classes range from a basic seminar on green technology to a targeted workshop for those looking to install a solar photovoltaic system. Coming courses will teach installation of solar thermal systems as well as how to apply for grants under the Ontario Feed-In Tariff (FIT) programme.

All courses are developed by the RET-Center's Executive Director Robin Easterbrook, worked a dozen years as a business instructor at the University of Windsor.

## Going green by staying local

The latest expansion at the RET-Center is a 2,700 square foot manufacturing area. The mounts4solar division manufactures on-site mounting systems for solar panels.

From the outset, both scn America and Green Sun Rising committed to localizing the production of as many of the components of their systems as possible. The Ontario Green Energy Act requires local content in all systems qualifying for the FIT and micro-FIT programmes. With its local manufacturing center, the RET-Center is ahead of the pack.

*Benjamin Führ*

**Further Information:**  
RET-Center: [www.RET-Center.com](http://www.RET-Center.com)

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