

## **Cochise County Fairgrounds goes solar**

*By Bruce Whetten  
Douglas Dispatch*

The Cochise County Fairgrounds are going solar.

Fairgrounds manager Karen Strongin announced last week that by the time the Cochise County Fair begins next month the main portion of the fairgrounds will be solar powered.

"We will be the first fairgrounds in the state of Arizona to go solar," she said. "All of the other fairground managers in the state are going to be down here the first day of the fair to see our new system."

This all came about Strongin said because she and her board are trying to save money.

Currently the fairgrounds spends well over \$1,000 a month in electricity on four separate meters it has on the grounds.

Strongin said there is the main meter located by the 4-H building then three others, one in the midway where the rides are, and two in the RV section.

"We are replacing the main one here on the grounds," she said. "We are going to put (the panels) on top of the 4-H building; that has been deemed structurally sound."

Strongin said the solar unit they are getting is a 34.65 kilowatt system that will offset 80 percent of the power they are currently using.

The solar unit also has a state of the art monitoring system that Single Source Renewables out of Phoenix will not only install but also do the upkeep on.

"It also has a 25 year guarantee to produce energy," she said.

Shawn Rathbun, project manager for Single Source Renewables said installation will start Sept. 12 and be completed around the 21st, the day before the fair.

Single Source Renewables is a Service Disabled Veteran owned company primarily based in Hawaii with a facility in Phoenix and another in Sweden.

"We should save the fairgrounds about \$300 per month which over the long term is guaranteed for at least 25 years," Rathbun said. "We're happy to be able to help this institution that has been around for 87 years defer some of their costs for electricity."

The solar panels that are being installed are premade in Asia and the project is going to run about \$150,000.

"We're waiting for the city of Douglas to okay the plans and issue the permits," Strongin said. "We're going to go through equipment leasing services in the Phoenix area and lease the system for 10 years. For the lease we'll be paying \$419 per month."

At the end of the 10 years there is an option to either buy the system, Strongin said or lease it again.

"This move I feel will benefit the fairgrounds a lot," she said. "People will be able to go to the top of the grandstands and you'll get a really good picture of it."

Single Source Renewables will also be on the fairgrounds during the fair with a big screen television that will project and show what the real time savings are and she is hoping people will stop by and check on the exhibit.

Strongin said this has been a two-year project and both she and her board are quite pleased with how things have progressed.

"It's been a long road but in the end it will be worth it," she said.

#### County Fair update

The 87th Annual Cochise County Fair kicks off Sept. 22 and runs through the 25th.

This year's theme is Where Friends Meet.

The fair will be celebrating Arizona's 100th birthday and 200 years of modern agricultural fairs.

They will be featuring the Cochise County Historic Display of Arizona. There will be live entertainment daily featuring Hypno Joe USA, XS Band, Rowdy Johnson's Band, the Doo Wah Riders, Funny Dummy Show, Marty Davis and Matt Sorensen's Can Art Entertainment

Admission will be \$6 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens and students.

Thursday will be \$1 day for seniors; Friday \$1 day for students.

The Cochise County Fair Board of Directors will be honored Thursday during the official opening ceremonies.

The ever popular intercollegiate rodeo will take place Friday and Saturday and livestock shows will take place Thursday, Friday and Saturday with the 4-H sale taking place on Sunday.

Strongin is hoping everyone will come out and enjoy the fair.