

## Here comes the sun — and savings: La Jolla Community Center solar project is complete

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The La Jolla Community Center has completed a two-year project to install a new roof and solar panels, anticipating annual energy costs to be reduced from \$5,400 to \$200.

The solar panels were switched on Feb. 15 and began producing power right away, according to LJCC board member and Facilities Committee Chairman Don Hodges.

The Community Center building currently is closed to the public because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The solar project features 29 panels placed along the west-facing portion of the roof on the La Jolla Boulevard side. With an annual output of 18,700 kilowatt hours, the panels can provide all the electricity used by the center each year.

“To date, the system has produced 1.3 megawatt hours [1,300 kilowatt hours] of electricity, despite the winter weather and low sun angle,” Hodges said last week.

“In our own small way, we will be contributing to the stability of the electrical grid by generating a substantial amount of power during the period of greatest demand on the hottest days of August and September,” he said. “As a result, we can prioritize comfort for members and guests that use the center without being concerned about a big electrical bill later.”

Hodges has said the energy cost savings could be applied to programs and other operational improvements.

The new roof cost about \$105,500; the solar panels about \$39,500. Both were funded from San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher’s Neighborhood Investment Program, the Kiwanis Club of La Jolla, Las Patronas, Sahm Family Foundation, San Diego Senior Foundation President Bob Kelly and individual donations.

Replacing the roof, which was more than 20 years old, began in winter 2018, along with discussions to add solar panels to save money and be more environmentally friendly.

The new roof was completed in October. The solar panels were installed in one day in December, Hodges said. San Diego-based Preman Roofing-Solar was the contractor for both projects. “They did a fantastic job,” Hodges said.

“We’re delighted that after months of design, permitting and contractor selection, we could complete this project,” Hodges said. There were several challenges, from delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic to funding holdups that meant the roof had to be installed in two phases, he said.



*The La Jolla Community Center has completed a two-year project to install a new roof and solar panels. (Courtesy)*



*Showing the La Jolla Community Center's new roof and solar panels are, from left, Don Hodges, a board member and chairman of the Facilities Committee; donors Diana Vines and John Malugen; Las Patronas President Martha Sottosanti and Vice President of Grants Tina Boynton; Community Center Chief Executive Ruth Yansick; Executive Director Nancy Walters; and Robert Cuthbertson, representing the Sahm Family Foundation. (Courtesy)*