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Milwaukee Brewing to Build Solar Hot Water System

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By Thomas Content

Green beer apparently isn't brewed only on St. Patrick's Day.

Milwaukee Brewing Co. will install a solar hot water system at its brewery in Walker's Point, with 28 solar panels that will be combined with a system that will preheat water used in the brewing process.

"Here's a good example of a perfect application for solar hot water," said Amy Heart, who runs the City of Milwaukee's solar program, Milwaukee Shines.

"Breweries use a lot of water - and a lot of hot water - and so it made sense for them to invest in this."



The project was funded in part with grants from the state Focus on Energy program as well as the ME2 Milwaukee Energy Efficiency program and Milwaukee Shines.

Through the combination of energy-efficiency upgrades that made the operation more efficient as well as the solar hot-water system, Milwaukee Brewing is forecasting a 27% savings in energy used during the brewing process.

"We hope our installation encourages others to make the investment," said Jim McCabe, the brewery's owner, in a statement. He added that the project will help boost the brewery's competitiveness.

The solar system is being supplied by Caleffi Solar, which has its North American headquarters in Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley and is a founding member of a regional solar hot-water business council.

Along with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, the business council is co-sponsoring a national solar thermal conference that begins Thursday at the downtown Hilton hotel.

"With companies like Caleffi Solar, Milwaukee is at the forefront of this industry with a strong and expanding solar supply chain," Heart said. "Solar for a Milwaukee brewery is the perfect way to showcase how solar is a solution in many applications

The brewery's green and energy-saving initiatives include water conservation measures as well as a biodiesel boiler that is fueled by grease from local residents and the county Parks Department.

Milwaukee Brewing has been at 613 S. 2nd St. since 2006.