

Chiropractor gets energy grant, loan

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WESTMINSTER - Clients of Westminster chiropractor Lisa Nash will soon receive their body work without expanding their carbon footprint.

Nash was among a group of Vermont business owners and farmers who recently received a grant and loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to pay for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Nash received a \$24,000 grant and a \$28,200 loan to help pay for a new energy system at her Westminster West Road office that will allow her to completely disconnect from the grid.

"This project will not have happened without this money," said Peter Thurrell, Nash's husband and owner of Soveren, the company that will be installing the new system. "This is going to make the chiropractic office a zero net energy project."

The money will be used to install an 11-kilowatt photovoltaic system, a three-ton ground source geothermal heat pump and a wood stove.

When the complete system is up and running, Nash will be able to produce all of the energy she needs to run her business.

The total system is projected to cost about \$100,000.

Thurrell said recent advancements in technology, along with changes in federal energy tax policies, have made it easier and more economical for small business owners and homeowners to invest in alternative energy projects.

At Nash's office a ground source heat pump will be integrated with 19 solar panels, and the complete system will be connected to a large storage battery. "There is no gas, no oil, it is entirely self-contained," said Thurrell. "It will make the property completely independent of fossil fuels."

As Nash pays off the loans over the next 10 years, she will be paying about what she now does for energy.

After the loans are paid off all of the energy she produces will be free, Thurrell said.

"It is good for the earth and good for the wallet," he said.

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Vermont director for USDA Rural! Development expects the projects to help farmers and business! owners long after the loans are paid off.

"More than ever our farms and small businesses are struggling with the high costs of energy," said Lambert. "These critical energy projects will help them grow their energy independence and their production."

The money Nash received was part of \$4.2 million in loans and grants Vermont was awarded in the latest round of USDA renewable energy funds from the Rural Energy for America Program.

Forty-one projects across the state will receive the money, going toward reverse osmosis machines for maple syrup producers, an upgraded energy and refrigeration system at Stonewood Farm in Orwell, and a manure digester at a farm Enosburg.

"These loans and grants will generate and save energy for Vermont's farmers and businesses for many years to come, while promoting Obama Administration efforts to transition to a renewable energy economy," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a press release announcing the grants and loans. "Farmers have significant opportunity to reduce their energy consumption or generate income by producing renewable energy that can be used by other consumers through USDA's REAP program."

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