

Living With Solar Power

by Kathy Stanford

Earth Day 2012 will be the second anniversary of our solar panel and solar attic fan installation. We didn't plan to get them installed on Earth Day, that's just when it was scheduled.

We have 12 solar panels, all facing south on the front of our home. They're made by Enphase Energy. We can go online and see how much power each one produces and the number of kilowatt hours produced over time. In fact if you go to enphase.com and click on the Login icon, there is a link to view customer installations. If you click on the map, you can see ours in Celina, TX under "Mazanec Residence."

On sunny days, even while operating our air conditioning or heat, the refrigerator AND the washing machine simultaneously, we often push power back onto the grid. Grayson Collin Electric credits our monthly bill for the amount of power we send back to the grid. Our monthly bills are roughly 30 percent lower each month with solar panels, and a little less when there's lots of cloudy weather.

Last April, when the hail storm came through, the roof, outdoor flood lights and screen sustained damage. The solar panels weren't damaged at all! They were easily removed to repair roof issues and install new shingles.

While the panels can be shut off with a switch by our electric meter, Texas has a lot of sunny days and it's a great place to harness solar power.