



TMO NEWS

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It's now J. Sussman & Sun

Company gets roof solar system aid

BY CLARE TRAPASSO

A CUSTOM window manufacturer has seen the light — and plans to use just that to power its Jamaica plant.

J. Sussman Inc. installed more than 550 solar panels onto its roof last week, stretching across roughly 13,000 square feet.

"It's going to handle virtually all of our electric needs," said company Vice President Steve Sussman as he stood on the roof surveying the sea of blue panels. "We've done the numbers and we expect it to pay off in three years."

The 125-kilowatt bright idea came from the Greater Jamaica Development Corp., which approached Sussman and his brother David earlier this year.

The development group helped the 104-year-old, multi-generational company ferret out city, state and federal tax credits, incentives and grants. The programs brought the tab of the eco-friendly project down from about \$619,000 to just \$62,000, Greater Jamaica officials said.

The Sussmans figured that because their business was spending about \$20,000 a year to power the plant, the solar power system would pay itself off in about three years.

"Energy is getting so expensive it's becoming prohibitive to do manufacturing in New York," Steve Sussman said. The solar panels, he added, are "going to lower our cost to operate."

The panels are made of silicon cells sheathed in glass, said Mark Groh, a supervisor with

Brooklyn-based Solar Energy Systems, which installed them.

Groh said the J. Sussman project is one of the largest that he has seen in Queens.

Richard Werber, director of Business Services at Greater Jamaica, said he hopes the success of that project will inspire more local businesses to go green.

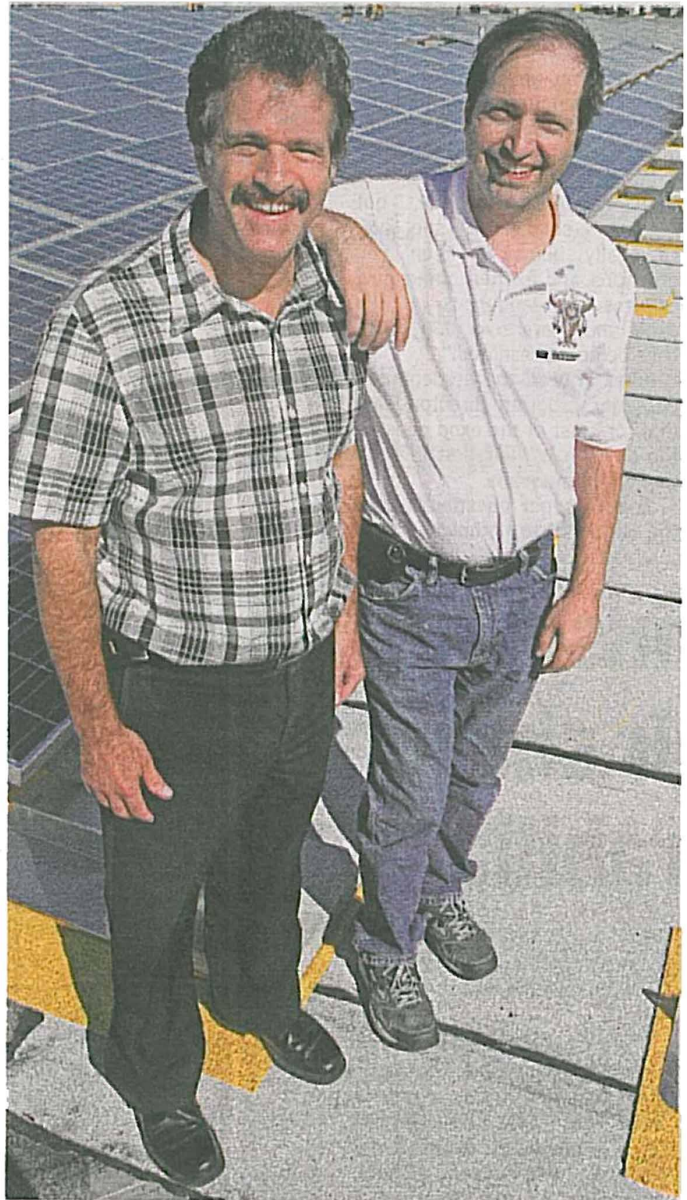
"We're looking to be able to approach other companies with flat roofs and sufficient needs with a package," he said. "J. Sussman is the poster child... for other companies here in southeast Queens."

Nationally, the solar power industry has been growing by about 40% each year, said Seth Masia, deputy editor of the Colorado-based Solar Today magazine. But New York is lagging behind other states partly because it takes so long to hook systems up to the power grid, he said.

The state has helped to fund 350 solar projects in the city through its incentive program since 2001, said New York State Energy Research and Development Authority spokesman Jeffrey Gordon. About 120 of them are in Queens, he said.

For the Sussmans, the almost \$238,000 in state funding they received played a big part in their decision to switch to solar power.

"I love that we can get our energy from a renewable resource instead of destroying the environment," said David Sussman, the company's president. "It's a win-win situation."



Steve and David Sussman stand near newly installed solar panels on roof of their custom window business in Jamaica. Photo by Christie M. Farriella