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Solar array energizes Mi Casa organization

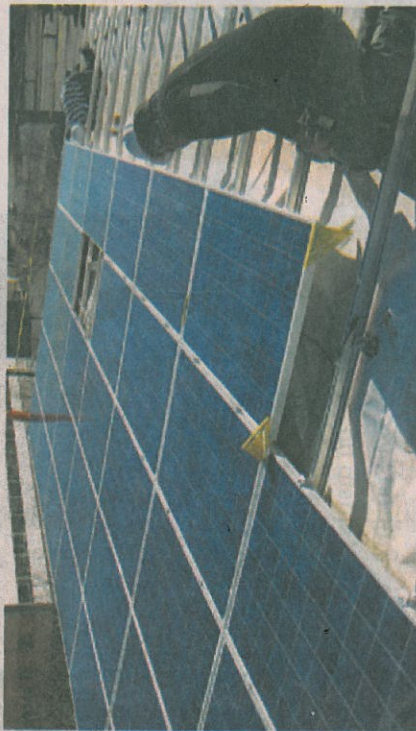
Panel installation at resource center provides jobs, will offset energy consumption, costs

By **Katharine Brenton**
YourHub.com Contributor

The cash flow from the federal economic stimulus may be drying up.

But the solar array being installed at Mi Casa — funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) — will have an enduring positive impact in the form of hands-on experience and employment for jobless individuals and cost savings for the organization dedicated to training disadvantaged workers to participate in Colorado's new energy economy.

The 40.5kW photovoltaic array at Mi Casa is the result of a close collaboration between public, private and nonprofit resources with the support of the Governor's Energy Office.



Workers install a 40.5kW photovoltaic solar array at Mi Casa, 360 S. Acoma St., Denver. Courtesy Mi Casa Resource Center

"This project is a perfect example of public-private partnership where multiple goals are accomplished — carbon emissions and fossil fuel consumption are offset by electricity generated

from renewable sources, private investors supply capital to jump start projects that would otherwise be delayed or never happen; and local jobs are supported for installation labor, engi-

neering and design," says Doug Wells, president of Renewable Energy Ventures, the private firm investing in Mi Casa's solar array as part of a power purchase agreement.

One of the jobs supported by this project belongs to Geronomo Adams, a Mi Casa graduate who will be working to install the solar array. Geronomo, a single father who shares custody of his six children, completed Mi Casa's Green Construction & Energy training program in December and is looking for full-time work; he was laid off from his job as a commercial plumber in January 2010.

Because Geronomo is receiving unemployment and the installation job at Mi Casa is temporary, he will work as an intern on the Mi Casa array to bank some experience and hopefully,

leverage the experience into a full-time permanent position.

"Mi Casa has provided me with a lot of support as I work to advance my situation," Geronomo says. "I am honored to be a part of this project because ultimately it will create opportunities for other people who need training to make a career change."

Mi Casa's 40.5kW solar array will produce an estimated 53,330 kWh per year, which will offset roughly 24 percent of Mi Casa's total energy consumption. Mi Casa also invested in wide-ranging energy efficiency performance upgrades to maximize the savings from solar energy.

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