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School Sisters of Notre Dame going solar

By [Tony Spinelli](#) on August 12, 2016 in [Lead News](#), [News](#) · [0 Comments](#)

About author



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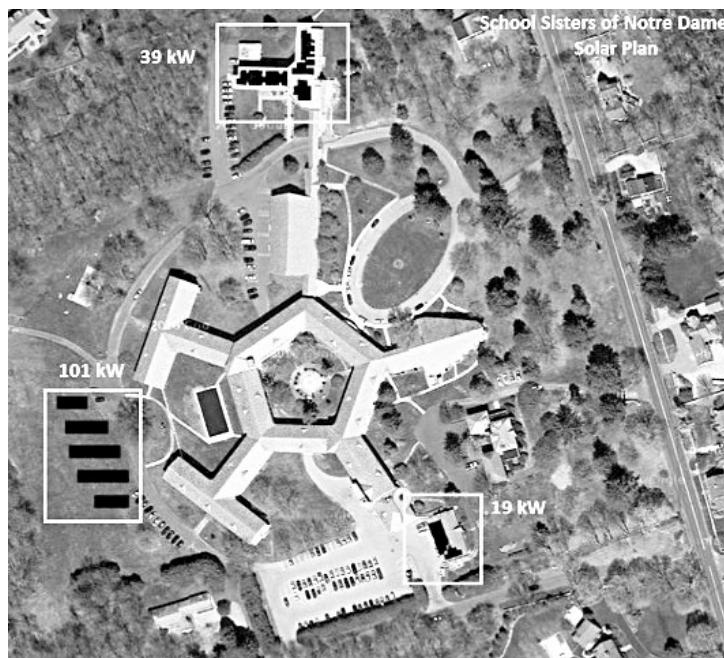
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The School Sisters of Notre Dame are going solar.

"We don't have enough space to generate all the electricity we need, but we'll be able to reduce our electric bill," said Alice Pisani, administrator of campus operations at the large complex on Belden Hill Road.

The convent has been operating in Wilton since 1961. It houses 95 women religious plus another 40 at the Lourdes Health Care Center on 38 acres, in five buildings in a style of architecture they describe as 1950s modern. There will be solar panel arrays on the roof of the health center, on another building with a shingle roof, and in the back part of the property on the ground, known as a solar garden, said Mark Robbins, president of MR Development in Norwalk, who is leading the project.

The sisters are leasing the system from The Connecticut Green Bank, a quasi-

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public agency working to promote green energy. Rather than put up the money to build a system, the sisters will lease the system from The Connecticut Green Bank at a cost that is less than the current electric bill, Robbins said.

The sisters figure they will save \$20,000 a year by switching to solar and by making other changes to their campus, like a changeover to LED lightbulbs and a modern, fuel-efficient boiler.

The sisters are going solar as part of a personal challenge.

"We challenge each other to live responsibly and sustainably with ourselves and all of creation and we feel this is one step we can take toward accomplishing our goals," said Sister Virginia Muller, community leader at Notre Dame. "We feel we are being better stewards by doing this."

The system should be up and running by the fall. The Planning and Zoning Commission approved the solar garden array during a meeting July 25.

The campus will become a regional center for exhibiting sustainability best practices, including control systems and water conservation measures like newly installed rain barrels, Robbins said.

"Solar is an important component of a multi-measure plan," he said.

The system will produce 200,000 kilowatt hours, equivalent to 28 good-sized Wilton homes, Robbins said.

It will keep the temperature cooler as well.

"This will improve the quality of life for the sisters," said Pisani.

The School Sisters are not the only ones in town going solar. The town recently moved forward on a plan to possibly sell excess solar energy that would be generated by two solar arrays on school buildings.

The Town Hall campus is also switching over to the type of LED lights the sisters are buying.

Tags: [school sisters of notre dame](#), [solar energy](#)

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