

# Get Connected

FindSolar.com's mission is to serve as a convenient, user-friendly means for owners of homes and small commercial buildings to evaluate solar energy systems and find qualified professionals to install and service these systems.

## Take advantage of this limited time offer, only for the 2005 National Solar Tour.

5% of annual dues go to ASES special outreach fund (with proceeds directed to ASES' Legacy Schools program, providing SOLAR TODAY subscriptions to libraries or toward the purchase of green tags).

**Basic Membership**  \$15/six months  \$25/year (regularly \$39)

*(Postage for Canadian addresses, add \$15/year; other non U.S. addresses, add \$25/year)*

**SOLAR TODAY subscription**  \$10/six months  \$20/year (regularly \$29)

*(Postage for Canadian addresses, add \$10/year; other non U.S. addresses, add \$20/year)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Tour location (City, State) \_\_\_\_\_

Check (payable to ASES in US\$)  Money Order  MasterCard  Visa

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Limited offer—full payment must be received on or before December 31, 2005.**

American Solar Energy Society • 2400 Central Avenue, Suite A • Boulder, Colorado 80301  
303.443.3130, ext. 107 • [www.ases.org](http://www.ases.org)

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## SOLAR PROFESSIONALS: Connect With Customers

Here are five reasons you, as a solar professional, will want to be listed on **Find-Solar.org**

- ★ Instant email notification of sales leads — free.
- ★ Demonstration to customers of your experience and quality through FindSolar.com's verification process and customer ratings and reviews.
- ★ Targeted leads, matching your capabilities and geographic area.
- ★ Online profile, detailing your products and services, regions served, certifications and more.
- ★ Public exposure through Find-Solar.org's advertising campaign.

## HOMEOWNERS: Find Resources

As a consumer, you'll find a wealth of information at FindSolar.com:

- ★ Learn what's involved in purchasing and installing solar systems.
- ★ Use the solar estimators to help estimate the cost and benefits.
- ★ Find a "verified" solar pro.

Why not try it? Log on to [www](http://www).

**Find-Solar.Org** and see for yourself!

# A NEW WEB TOOL, FIND-SOLAR.ORG, CONNECTS CONSUMERS TO LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY PROFESSIONALS.

BY SCOTT CRONK

**R**enewable energy is finding its way into the lives of many Americans, both through “green energy” purchases and an increasing number of home and commercial building system installations. For others, renewable energy remains a futuristic idea whose practical application can be intimidating.

A new website, Find-Solar.org, aims to change that.

In recent years, solar power generating and water-heating system costs have steadily declined, system quality and reliability have improved, many financial incentives have become available and the field of renewable energy professional services has expanded and matured. Find-Solar.org puts consumers in touch with these realities through innovative Web-based tools and database-driven resources.

## MATCHING HOMEOWNERS WITH SOLAR PROS

Funded under a five-year U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) grant, Find-Solar.org is being developed and administered through an alliance led by the American Solar Energy Society (ASES), in partnership with the Solar Electric Power Association, the DOE and Energy Matters LLC. The site’s advisory panel includes industry and technology specialists, contractors, utility personnel and consumers.

Find-Solar.org’s mission is to serve as a convenient, user-friendly means for owners of homes and small commercial buildings to evaluate solar energy systems and find qualified professionals to install and service these systems. The site assembles national and region-specific solar program and utility information into an array of online tools and content:

- “Quick calculators” to help people estimate the costs and benefits of solar electric and solar thermal energy systems for their particular locations and building needs.
- A trusted means by which consumers can access and evaluate solar energy contractors and professional services.
- Links to and resources about solar energy data, programs and other helpful information.

## FOR CONSUMERS, HANDS-ON SOLAR TOOLS

The solar energy industry has many success stories. FindSolar.com puts consumers in touch with this experience. By enabling visitors to rate the service provided by solar professionals, Find-Solar.org allows solar system owners to communicate their experiences and share them with those considering an installation.

Utility rates and metering options vary from utility to utility and state to state. So do solar incentive programs. Find-Solar.org offers online cost estimator tools backed by extensive databases of cost and incentive information. These tools cover solar electric (photovoltaic), solar water-heating and solar pool/spa-heating applications. Solar space-heating/cooling applications will also be added to Find-Solar.org’s online estimator tools. These estimators are user-friendly, requiring only minimal data input from the user to calculate local cost and benefit ranges for a planned system. They deliver easy-to-understand explanations of how one can maximize solar return on investment, minimize upfront costs and enjoy years of clean, reliable energy produced on-site. In future years, Find-Solar.com will provide design assistance, including passive features and daylighting, and energy-efficient construction and appliance information.

MY SOLAR  
ESTIMATOR

## FOR SOLAR PROS, A NEW MARKETING CHANNEL

As a distributed energy option, the solar industry relies on a broad and dispersed network of qualified solar professionals to install and service solar energy systems. Many of these professionals are self-employed or work for small or medium-sized companies with limited marketing and sales resources. One of Find-Solar.org’s main features is its ability to link interested consumers to qualified solar professionals.

Solar professionals can open a free account on FindSolar.com and display an extensive profile of the services, products and experience they offer. Find-Solar.org then matches these professionals with interested consumers whose specific needs and geographic area fit the profile. Solar equipment manufacturers also can be listed to help people learn about the many equipment options available. These tools, together with a broad array of educational resources and links help consumers learn about solar systems, allow consumers and solar professionals to “talk with the same language” and get down to business. This active website is designed to engage people and transform an interest into a solar application.

Beginning this fall, ASES and its partners will begin an extensive marketing campaign to encourage consumers to use Find-Solar.org and connect them with solar professionals. Various cooperative marketing events are planned, as are print and search engine “key word” marketing campaigns.

Also beginning this fall, Find-Solar.org becomes an essential component of the ASES National Solar Tour — a tool that tour-goers can turn to for next steps. Tour-takers see solar energy systems providing homeowners in their communities with real-life benefits. They discuss the costs and how to take advantage of local, state and national incentive programs. But how does one adopt the lessons learned to their particular situation? And how does one find and evaluate qualified professional service providers? Find-Solar.com helps answer these questions.

To learn more, access [www.Find-Solar.Org](http://www.Find-Solar.Org)

*Scott Cronk is principal of Energy Matters LLC, Santa Rosa, Calif., which specializes in websites, television programs and multi-media campaigns to promote the widespread use of renewable energy. Cronk is the lead developer of Find-Solar.org. Contact him at [info@energymatters.net](mailto:info@energymatters.net).*