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New technologies give solar energy more bang for the buck

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The price for deploying solar has dropped significantly over the past few years, and much of that has come through economies of scale; as more and more solar PV (photovoltaic) systems are installed across the United States, the cost for the system components, such as panels, mounting hardware and inverters, has become increasingly cost effective.

At the same time, however, new technologies are emerging across the industry to make solar even more efficient, giving systems even more bang for their buck, so to speak. Just a few years ago, solar panels had the capability to convert about 15 percent of available energy to electricity. Today, they're creeping up on 25 percent in the lab!

The price per watt of solar energy is also dropping; in the early part of this decade, people wondered if solar energy would ever fall below the one dollar per watt mark. Today, it's hovering around 80 cents per watt. In essence, we're paying less and gaining more—more solar energy and more cost savings.

Solar technology is continually evolving and improving, and there are hundreds of companies working to push the envelope on efficiency and affordability and find a niche for themselves. One such company is tenK Solar, which produces high-density, high-yield PV panels. TenK Solar uses the same PV cells and materials that are used in older solar arrays (using standard parts keeps system costs low, after all) but integrates them into a better design that eliminates many of the issues that could impact system performance. One of the most notable features of their panel design is that they more effectively convert light into energy by capturing the light that normally falls between rows of modules and redirecting it, thereby boosting energy output. TenKSolar is a great example of a company that is aiming even higher than what the industry expects to make small improvements that generate big results.

There are other companies like tenK Solar out there today looking at new ways to make solar technology more efficient and cost effective. Leading solar developers, keep a close eye on emerging solar PV technologies that have the potential to transform the industry, and could translate into additional and significant savings for businesses and organizations. Sometimes a customer's particular situation is unique and they can benefit from one of these cutting edge solutions. We can't wait to see what's going to come from these innovative companies next!

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