

McDonald's Golden Arches Turning Green?

The iconic McDonald's arches are still gold, but the restaurants are quickly turning green, as in sustainable green to conserve resources and preserve the environment.

When Cary, North Carolina's restaurant became the first green McDonald's in the state and second in the US in 2009, the first question customers asked was, "If it's green, where are the solar panels?"

Patrons associated solar as the major sign of being green. So, when franchise owner Ric Richards decided to convert his second Cary location to completely green, he knew solar had to play a role.

John Rockwell, AIA, LEED AP BD+C Sustainability Manager US Restaurant Design worked with Bob Eaton, Managing Partner for Day & Night Solar in selecting a solar canopy structure for McDonald's (US Restaurants). The Cary parking lot had an ideal space for a solar canopy, so Rockwell suggested that Richards contact Day & Night Solar.

Proposals and plans were submitted and finalized. Day & Night Solar began the work of installing a 39.60kW canopy that would also serve as covered parking for up to ten vehicles.

As the construction began, customers were fascinated and puzzled by the structure. When they would ask employees what was going on, the response was very positive when they learned the structure was to produce solar power.

The restaurant had been completely demolished and rebuilt in four short months. Ninety-nine percent of the old restaurant was reused. The solar panels are running seven and a half percent of the electricity in the store.

"Working with Day & Night Solar was a pleasurable and seamless experience," says Richards.

"The work was completed on time and the city gave approvals with no difficulty. In addition, Day & Night provided US made products, including Lifeline Energy Solar panels. In keeping with its goal of helping to create local jobs, Day & Night contracted with a local company, Yes! Solar Solutions, for the installation assistance, which went seamlessly as well."

McDonald's will be turning greener as it continues its LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Volume program which allows buildings to be certified by the US Green Building and Green Certification Institute. The goal is to construct 25 LEED certified projects over 3 years starting in 2013.

The grand opening of the new Cary, North Carolina LEED certified restaurant is Monday, November 18, 2013.

Green energy savings, green savings in environmental resources, translates to green dollars to invest in more employees, more restaurants and funding for charitable causes like Ronald McDonald's House. All of these green benefits give more reasons to say, "I'm lovin' it."

Visit <http://mcdonaldsadvantage.com/events/> for more details on the Cary, North Carolina McDonald's and the grand opening festivities.

To find out how solar can work for your home or business, visit www.DayandNightSolar.com.