

State Representative Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer)



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Solar Power Installed by Rep Thatcher Just in Time for Earth Day



(Salem) “It was important for me to show I care about the conserving energy and protecting the environment,” said State Representative Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer) after installing a new 20.4 kilowatt photovoltaic solar system on the roof of her contracting business. The system is expected to save nearly 23,000 kilowatt hours a year.

“We are pleased to see these kinds of projects,” said Michael Graine, Director of the [Oregon Department of Energy](#). “Most use of solar energy in Oregon has been in the residential sector. Projects like these show that solar energy can be important for businesses as well.”

With Earth Day just around the corner, a group of Chemeketa Community College students will tour the solar system at KT Contracting on Wednesday afternoon. Thatcher explained, “solar is a great natural resource in so many ways; it’s a sustainable and responsible source of fuel. I encourage other business owners to turn to solar as a smart investment.”

“I am very impressed with the fact that Representative Thatcher has personally made the decision to be part of the solution and not just talking about the problems we all face with the rising cost of energy,” noted Ron Summers, owner of Summers Solar Systems in Salem which installed the new equipment for Thatcher. “I have always held that actions speak louder than words and in this political climate, there are a lot of words.”

The price tag on Thatcher’s system ran \$135,300. After [new state and federal tax credits](#) are subtracted, plus incentives from the Energy Trust of Oregon and savings on the power bill, Thatcher’s solar system will have paid for itself within four years. Summers notes alternate energy makes sense not just for bottom line but also on the cost to the environment. “There will always be a trade off between the energy we need in our daily lives and the environment we live in, but the application of solar energy to our homes and businesses can help maintain and preserve our quality of life.”

Summers’ business is booming these days. Hundreds of solar electric systems are popping up all over Oregon. In the past four years more than \$3 million in direct incentives have been provided to business and home owners by the Energy Trust and the state Department of Energy.

Representative Thatcher now works in two buildings with solar power; her contracting company headquarters at 8970 Huff Avenue in Salem and the State Capitol. In 2002 Oregon became the first state to [mount solar panels on its Capitol](#). Thatcher is no stranger to the value of using solar. Her business uses messages boards and portable illuminated signs which also operate by harnessing the sun’s power.

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