

# The Hudson Independent

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## SunBlue Energy

- Written by by Neal Rentz
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Chris Hale, owner of SunBlue Energy photo: Neal Rentz

Are you tired of paying utilities for electricity without getting any money back? How would you like to sell electricity to the power companies?

Sleepy Hollow resident Chris Hale has been helping customers to do just that for the past four years through his ownership of SunBlue Energy, which is located in Tarrytown.

Hale was a project manager for computer software data base management in the corporate law field when he decided to take some classes at a community college in solar energy, “just out of curiosity.”

“I decided to just quit my job and start the company,” Hale said. “It was in line with my skillset.

I've always wanted to start my own business.”

“We design and install solar electric systems for homes and businesses,” he explained. By installing one of his firm’s systems, many customers do not need to rely on utilities for their electricity, he said.

Solar power has become much more feasible than ever. “The technology has gotten better. But what has really spiked it is the demand,” he explained. “The demand in Europe, primarily, started the whole fervor as far as lowering the production costs. Then China came in as the manufacturing giant in the solar industry and that really drove down manufacturing costs. The price of everything came down dramatically. So that’s the main breakthrough in the last few years, the price. It got much more affordable.”

SunBlue Energy installs solar panels that are manufactured domestically as well as imported from overseas. The company does about 30 installments annually, and primarily focuses on installing systems in the rivertowns area, but it also installs systems elsewhere.

Solar is a limited source of power, but it still can be valuable, especially in the United States, Hale said. “Germany is the leader in the world in installed solar even though the continental United States is more sunny than Germany. (But) they are making it work very well there,” he noted.

The percent of the energy that a household can obtain from solar power depends on the amount of energy used and the size of the roof that holds the solar panels, Hale explained. A senior couple can obtain all their energy from solar, while a family of five with teenaged children can obtain between 50 and 60 percent of their energy with utilities providing the rest. The average homeowner can save \$150 a month by using solar power, he added.

“The sun hits the panel and creates electricity. The electricity is converted from DC to AC,” Hale explained. “The sun is creating electricity during the day so it’s powering electrical panels. So any lights you have on are powered by the sun. But usually during the day you’re producing more than you are consuming so that excess power gets pushed back into the grid and your meter spins backward. It’s very exciting.”

Hale’s solar power customers are getting paid by utilities for the energy that is going back to the grid.

Property owners are being offered tax incentives from the state and federal governments to install solar power systems. Taking into account the tax incentives, it costs between \$8,000 and \$12,000 to install solar systems. “It pays for itself in about six years. The panels we use guarantee performance for 30 years,” he noted.

Hale has a simple goal for his company. “We really want to be the ‘go to’ local installer,” Hale said. “We don’t want to dominate the world, that’s not our style. We want to provide quality service for as many homes as possible.”

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