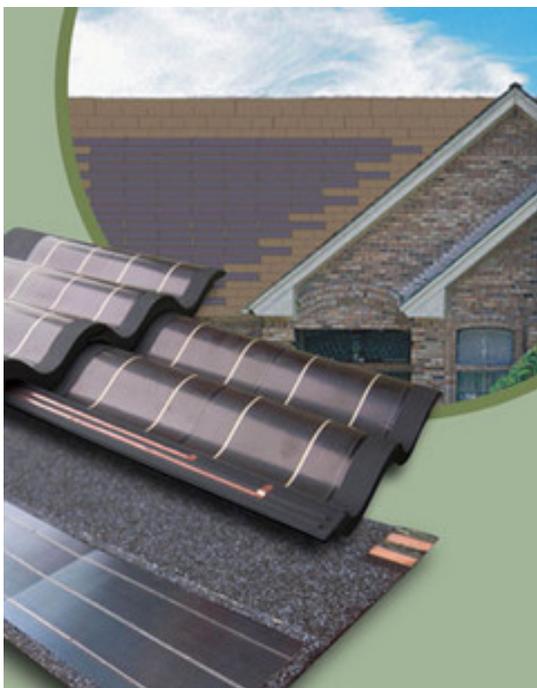


Dow to Sell Solar Roof Shingles

Matt Daily

Editor's Note: Considering that private individuals added more solar megawattage to the grid than commercial interests, adding to the ability of people to add solar cells to their home with a relatively easy drop-in solution will have far-reaching impact.



NEW YORK (Reuters) - Dow Chemical Co said on Monday it would begin selling a new rooftop shingle next year that converts sunlight into electricity -- and could generate \$5 billion in revenue by 2015 for the company.

The new solar shingles can be integrated into rooftops with standard asphalt shingles, Dow said, and will be introduced in 2010 before a wider roll-out in 2011.

"We're looking at this one product that could generate \$5 billion in revenue by 2015 and \$10 billion by 2020," Jane Palmieri, managing director of Dow Solar Solutions, told Reuters in an interview.

The shingle will use thin-film cells of copper indium gallium diselenide (CIGS), a photovoltaic material that typically is more efficient at turning sunlight into electricity than traditional polysilicon cells.

Dow is using CIGS cells that operate at higher than 10 percent efficiency, below the efficiencies for the top polysilicon cells -- but would cost 10 to 15 percent less on a

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per watt basis.

Dow Solar Solutions said it expects "an enthusiastic response" from roofing contractors for the new shingles, since they require no specialized skills or knowledge of solar systems to install.

The new product is the latest advance in "Building Integrated Photovoltaic" (BIPV) systems, in which power-generating systems are built directly into the traditional materials used to construct buildings.

BIPV systems are currently limited mostly to roofing tiles, which operate at lower efficiencies than solar panels and have so far been too expensive to gain wide acceptance.

Dow's shingle will be about 30 to 40 percent cheaper than current BIPV systems.

The Dow shingles can be installed in about 10 hours, compared with 22 to 30 hours for traditional solar panels, reducing the installation costs that make up more than 50 percent of total system prices.

The product will be rolled out in North America through partnerships with home builders such as Lennar Corp and Pulte Homes Inc before marketing is expanded, Palmieri said.

Dow received \$20 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to help develop its BIPV products.

The company also produces fluids used in concentrated solar systems, in which sunlight is used to generate heat that produces steam to power a turbine.

In addition, it supplies materials used to help manufacture photovoltaic panels and increase their efficiency.

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