

# Pricey solar panels worth it in long run.

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As he looked over the top of a ladder at the roof of a Miami Beach home, developer Ronald James Migoya was amazed by what he saw.

"You have to see this," he called to his business partner below.

Laid across the rooftop were about 800 square feet of what appeared to be blue rubber mats. But these weren't just any rubber mats. They were ones that use solar power to generate electricity.

Ken Fields, director and investor of the eco-business Electron Solar Energy, unrolled the flexible, gel-filled solar mats onto the roof of his Miami Beach home last May -- a \$60,000 investment that has significantly cut his electric bill.

He hopes the solar power will zero out his bills -- or even generate enough that he can sell the excess back to Florida Power & Light -- once he installs more efficient lighting and insulation in his home.

Migoya, president of Visionscape Development Construction Services in Miami, said he'd like to start offering some of those products to his clients. "People get really excited because they start to see that there are new possibilities of energy efficiency," he said.

"It is a tough sell," he said. "Right now, it does cost more. There is a upfront cost on these systems. But in the long run, there are a lot of rebates. There is also a tremendous peace of mind that you're consuming and spending less on energy.

There are small things that can be done that cost a little. Or you can go crazy and go with a full system."

With state and federal tax credits, Fields said, property owners are recouping the cost of energy-efficient improvements such as solar power faster than they did just a few years ago.