



WASTE REPORT for June 01, 2015

Waste, Powered by the Sun

In the latest example of a federal solar project gone wrong, the Little Rock, AR Veterans Hospital made an **\$8 million investment on nearly 7000 solar panels that were never turned on**. Now the VA is removing those panels to make way for a new parking structure, which supposedly will house the solar panels on its roof.¹

Local news reports show decisions were made on the parking project with plenty of time to prevent the wasted spending on the solar panels. The parking project was approved in August 2012, six months before the solar project broke ground, and the site was selected for the parking structure a month before the solar project was complete.²

But it was not the parking structure that prevented the panels from being turned on. According to local news, the solar project had design flaws that caused difficulties linking up to the local power grid. ArkansasMatters.com reports that a **representative for the solar project contractor likened the project to baking a cake, saying, "We didn't have a good recipe here and we're afraid of toasting something."**³

Even if the project had come off as planned, the VA estimates the solar panels would save about \$150,000 a year (about 12 percent) in electricity costs. Meaning **it would take 53 years for the panels to pay for themselves.**⁴

Members of the Arkansas congressional delegation, including Senator John Boozman and Rep. French Hill (R)-who represents Little Rock, are asking the Inspector General to investigate this matter further.⁵

Uncle Sam, an abundant source of waste

¹ Dover, Erica, *Little Rock VA built solar panels knowing they would be "relocated"*; KATV (ABC) 7, Little Rock, AR; April 2015

² Ibid.

³ Berry, Josh, *7,000 Solar Panels at VA Hospital Remain Turned Off*; Arkansasmatters.com, Nextstarbroadcasting; Arkansas, April 2015

⁴ Buck, Philip, *State delegation looking into VA Hospital solar panels*; THV (CBS) 11, Little Rock, AR; April 2015

⁵ Ibid.