

Most Americans think solar should be offered on all new homes

SAN FRANCISCO, California, US, June 28, 2006 (Refocus Weekly) Homebuilders should offer solar PV as an option for all new homes, according to 79% of respondents in a U.S. survey.

Of the 1,004 adults surveyed, 69% of those over the age of 65 agree with the statement while 84% of younger respondents (25 to 49) support solar on new homes. Those living in southern and western regions of the U.S. were more likely to favour solar (83%) than those in the midwest or northeast (74%).

"Solar has been popular for a long time in areas like California and Arizona; now we're seeing that the rest of the country is ready to embrace solar energy, and consumers want the option of having solar power their new home," says Ron Kenedi of Sharp Electronics, which commissioned the survey. "As the world's leading solar manufacturer, Sharp is encouraged to see that more and more Americans recognize the economic and environmental benefits of solar and understand that it is a vital part of the energy solution."

The survey was conducted in May by Roper Public Affairs, a division of GfK NOP. The 1,004 adults were measured on their perceptions of solar power.

When told that solar homes have a proven higher resale value, 64% said they would be willing to pay more for home with a PV system. Half of the respondents said they would spend up to 10% more for a solar-equipped house, "indicating that the cost of a solar system will not prevent Americans from embracing forms of clean, renewable energy," adds Sharp.

The most compelling argument for installing solar power for 42% was to save money on utility bills, while 31% said it was to decrease the U.S. dependence on oil and 18% said it was to reduce environmental pollution. The survey also showed that 73% believe solar energy technology to be more important today than ever.

Sharp Electronics is the U.S. subsidiary of Sharp of Japan, which has expanded its annual solar cell production output to 450 MW. U.S. solar assembly operations started at the Memphis production facility in October 2003, with an annual production capacity of 60 MW.