



Putting solar panels on the roof can cost a homeowner tens of thousands of dollars up front. That's a lot of cash in a tight market, even if the goal is clean, renewable energy.

A few utilities are trying another tack: renting the rooftops of homeowners or businesses, and handling the installation and maintenance of the solar panels themselves.

Duke Energy, a major utility serving the Carolinas and parts of the Midwest, aims to rent roof or land space from 425 sites in North Carolina. Final permission from the regulator is forthcoming, but Duke hopes that they will all start producing solar power by 2010.

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