

Santa Rosa Plaza PACE Bond Recipient Article

The admirable efforts of the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program, <http://www.sonomacountyenergy.org/>, which has received considerable attention from the Obama Administration and is now being reflected in the new federal energy bill, has set the stage for commercial and residential property owners across the country to take a stand when it comes to social responsibility. And Santa Rosa Plaza, one of the premier downtown shopping destinations in Northern California, is among the first to do so. In taking significant steps to emerge as an innovative leader in responsible environmental business practices, the company has installed a "Cool Roof," a highly reflective and emissive roofing system that stays 50 to 60 degrees cooler than a typical roof. This state-of-the-art concept is made possible entirely through the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) funds provided by Sonoma County. The PACE program, which was passed by the California legislature in 2008, is a pioneering concept that raises funds for a city or county to lend proceeds from the issuance of the bonds to commercial and residential property owners to finance energy retrofits, specifically energy efficiencies and small renewable energy systems, which can dramatically reduce both monetary and energy costs. These property owners then repay the bonds, including interest, for either 10 or 20 years via annual assessments on individual property tax bills. Santa Rosa Plaza will be the first large-scale commercial PACE project to date in California, promising to provide a cause study to be used throughout the country.

"We made a conscious decision to take a proactive approach to make a sound investment on the business front while doing what is right for the environment. We are thankful for Sonoma County's leadership, which made this project possible," said George Caraghiaur, Vice President of Energy Services for Simon Property Group, who owns Santa Rosa Plaza. "It is our hope that we will serve as pioneers in this arena, encouraging others to explore the many ways to reduce energy use *now*, rather than delaying sound financial and environmental decisions."

The PACE bond market, which has the potential of exceeding \$500 billion, promises to provide numerous benefits for commercial and residential owners, cities, and the environment. PACE bonds increase property owners' overall return on investment from energy efficiency or renewable projects. Cities benefit from job creation while taking on low obligation risk and generating revenue from interest. Ultimately, everyone benefits from reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and in the case of Cool Roofs, from a reduced urban heat island effect that raises air temperatures in our communities

"This is just one of the many steps we're taking to reduce our carbon footprint here at Santa Rosa Plaza," said Laura Kozup, Area Mall Manager at Santa Rosa Plaza, who also oversees nearby Coddington Mall. "We recently installed an eco-friendly energy management system that will be an effective complement to the Cool Roof, and we are very grateful to Sonoma County for enabling us to serve as an example to other corporate citizens who are reviewing opportunities to reduce energy costs and create jobs responsibly."

PACE bonds can be issued by municipal financing districts or finance companies and the proceeds can be typically used to retrofit both commercial and residential properties. For more information about how to lead the way to a more energy-efficient tomorrow, please visit www.pacenow.org