

IKEA's Sunrise store plugs in to solar energy

Move to help retailer reduce 'local and global footprint'

BY MIRIAM VALVERDE

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Keeping in line with its sustainability plans, IKEA officially plugged in its 293,000-square-foot Sunrise store to a solar energy system late January – making it the largest such installation in South Florida, company and city officials said.

The 4,368-panel installation also pose the furnishing retailer as Florida's largest solar owner, aside from utility companies, said Joseph Roth, spokesman for IKEA U.S. The South Florida installation is the company's 35th completed solar project in the U.S.

"It's part of the Swedish heritage," Roth said. "Control your own destiny. We buy our land, build our own business." Other companies enter power purchase agreements or solar leases, he said.

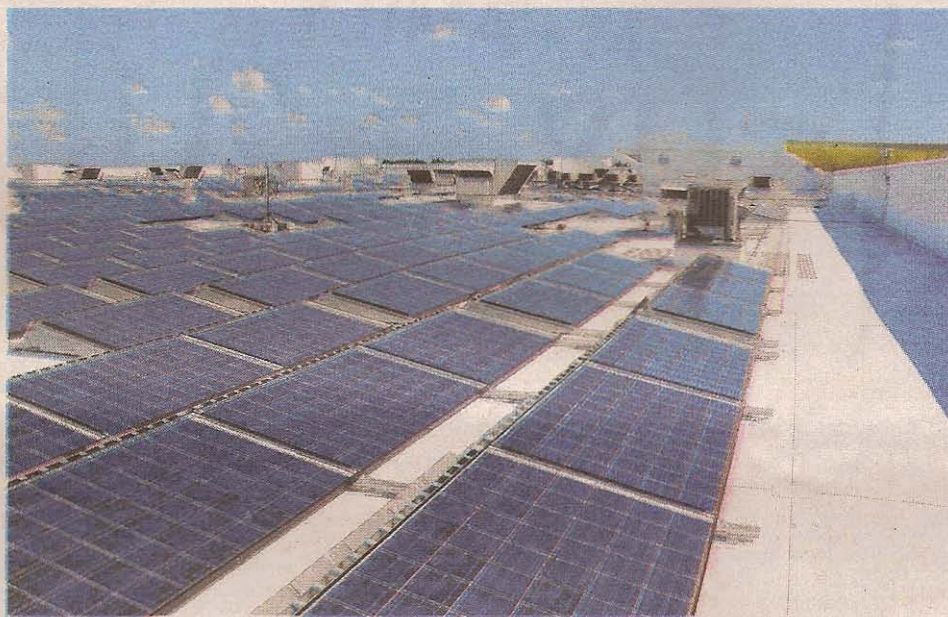
IKEA's measure will help reduce "our local and global footprint," said Sunrise Mayor Mike Ryan.

"It's hugely important. It serves as an example that you can be both successful as a business and environmentally sensitive through innovation," Ryan said. "The size of what they've done is unprecedented."

The Sunrise system is expected to produce about 1.55 million kWh of clean electricity annually – equivalent to the reduction of 1,181 tons of carbon dioxide, the eliminated emissions of 210 cars or powering of 134 homes a year, according to a company press release.

Broward County received a federal grant to make the process of solar installations faster and easier for residents and businesses, said Armando Linares, deputy director of Broward's Environmental Protection & Growth Management Department.

"Reducing the carbon footprint to attain



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A view of the solar-energy system installation at IKEA's 293,000-square-foot Sunrise store. IKEA officially plugged-in its installation Jan. 30.

411 on the solar project

IKEA in Sunrise: 293,000-square-foot, 151 NW 136th Ave.

Sunrise location: IKEA's 35th completed solar project in U.S.

Solar energy system: 4,368 panels

better air quality is the motivation behind those kinds of resources," Linares said. "The focus of Broward County is to promote other retailers to also entertain and roll out renewable and solar energy for their facilities."

Sunrise's installation is expected to generate 35 to 70 percent of energy, Roth said. The store, located on 20 acres near Inter-

state 595 and 136th Avenue, will remain on the Florida Power & Light Co. grid, he added.

Looking forward, IKEA plans to become energy independent by 2020 by generating enough renewable energy to cover operations' consumption, Roth said. There are more than 330 stores worldwide.

All new IKEA stores will be evaluated for sustainability opportunities, Roth said, including the upcoming store in Miami-Dade. The Sweetwater store is expected to open around fall 2014.

"We consider IKEA a trailblazer," Ryan said.

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