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Pennsville Library Roof-Mounted Solar Reflects Well on the Community

"The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and, after sunset, night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows."
– Ralph Waldo Emerson commencement address on Aug 31, 1837, to Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Society.

The Pennsville library has a great new collection of books for young readers called "We the People – A More Perfect Union." According to the American Library Association—in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities—Pennsville Library's "We the People Bookshelf" is based on the premise that literature can be a window on a nation's character, ideals, and aspirations.

Similarly, a community's design, maintenance, and use of its building stock can be a reflection of that community's character, ideals, and aspirations.

The Pennsville Library has the newest, sharpest, and most functional sign on the Route 49 corridor, a fact that is no surprise to those in the digital signage industry.

The strength, resilience, and tenacity displayed by the Friends of the Pennsville Public Library in view of the Fiscal Year 2011 budget cut speaks to the high ideals of concerned community members.

And now with beautiful and functional cost-saving solar technology, the library actually uses its physical structure to teach and inspire on average its 90 patrons per day, and intrigue another 12,000 motorists driving by daily. The library will offer renewable energy educational and outreach initiatives for years to come as the solar modules installed by Trinity Solar come with a 25-year warranty.

The library's initiative also contributes 10 points towards Pennsville's "Sustainable Jersey" certification. Sustainable Jersey™ is a certification program for municipalities in New Jersey that want to go green, save money, and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term. To learn more, visit www.SustainableJersey.com or pick up a brochure at the Pennsville Library.

The Iroquois, creators of participatory democracy in North America, had a Great Law that required: "In every deliberation, we must consider the impact on the seventh generation, even if it requires having skin as thick as the bark of a pine." In other words even if it requires pain and sacrifice on our part, we must optimize our actions today to positively impact the welfare of our offspring. This is sustainability.

In 1900, then Governor of New York Theodore Roosevelt—and heir-apparent to the Vice-Presidency—gave a speech in Washington D.C., stating: "I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use our natural resources, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob by wasteful use, the generations that come after us." That is sustainability.

In 1983, the United Nations convened the World Commission on Environment and Development—also known as the Brundtland Commission (named after its chair). The commission was charged to report on "the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development." The Commission released its report in 1987—to worldwide acclaim—defining sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The Commission further noted that we shall all fail or succeed together (reminding me of Benjamin Franklin's similar observation while drafting the Declaration of Independence).

Also in 1987 was the ratification of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, an international treaty that has resulted in the successful phase-out of over 98 percent of all controlled ozone depleting substances. This will make for an interesting 25th anniversary observance opportunity during a 2012 Presidential election year.

Notwithstanding the success of the Montreal Protocol, carbon dioxide emissions—in the USA and throughout the world—continue to increase. Greenhouse gases are causing global warming and increasing weather volatility. Forest cover continues to be depleted, and dependence on fossil fuels is trending up. We can do better, particularly in the State of New Jersey, where the solar cell was invented.

Buildings have been documented to consume prodigious amounts of energy and to be the proximate cause of significant greenhouse gases. Professionals involved in creating and marketing the built environment care deeply about this issue. And indeed, a number of substantive credentials and designations have emerged, with which professionals can avail themselves.

Other interesting 25th anniversaries to be observed in 2012 include the New Jersey Mandatory Recycling Act of 1987 and the New Jersey Solid Waste Management Act of 1987. The U.S. Green Building Council adopted the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainability in 1994. And the U.S. Green Building Council's [International] GreenBuild Conference and Expo will be held in Philadelphia in Nov 2012.

We should note that New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson was elected President in 1912. The Year 2012 will also be the 50th anniversary of a very powerful book that launched the green movement, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. 2012 begins the phase-out of incandescent light bulbs, invented in New Jersey.

For military history lovers, we will soon be observing the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, declared by many as our Second War of Independence. For scholars, 2012 will mark the 175th anniversary of Ralph Waldo Emerson's deliverance of one of America's greatest commencement addresses, which Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., declared to be an "intellectual Declaration of Independence." Albeit perhaps of smaller impact, but meaningful to those who appreciate its open doors, Pennsville Library will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2012.

Year 2012 will be the tipping point for green building, renewable energy, and sustainable development in this country—and the foundation for our energy independence. Sustainable development and natural resources management is an ethical imperative and a civic duty. Learn about it at the Pennsville Library.

The author of this article, Joseph Scarpa, lives in Pennsville NJ; he learned many of the facts in this article by investing some time with his kids at the Pennsville Public Library.

Green Paradigm Realty LLC, established February 2009, is a real estate brokerage and advisory firm specializing in sustainable development and renewable energy projects. Its principal, Joseph Scarpa, is credentialed by the Green Building Certification Institute in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®); by EcoBroker International as a Certified EcoBroker; and has earned the Green Designation by the National Association of REALTORS® Green Resource Council. Green Paradigm Realty LLC is a member of the Green Resource Council, Urban Land Institute, U.S. Green Building Council, EcoBroker International, Southern New Jersey Development Council, and IEEE. If you are interested in shifting the paradigm to a greener economy, please visit www.GreenParadigmInstitute.com.