

# Solar a standard feature on these S.A. homes

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Friday, October 12, 2012

MySanAntonio.com

San Antonio-based [Imagine Homes](#) will put [Dow Chemical Co.](#)'s solar shingles on all of its homes in a new North Side neighborhood — the first time a San Antonio production builder will use solar energy as part of its standard amenity package.

Imagine is using Dow's Powerhouse Solar Shingles on homes at the Willis Ranch neighborhood near the intersection of East Borgfeld Drive and Bulverde Road near U.S. 281.

[Kris Zebrowski](#), spokesman at Build San Antonio Green, said that another builder is working in the neighborhood, so not every home there will have solar. But all of the Imagine Homes will.

"It's still a remarkable achievement," Zebrowski said. "This is the first time that any builder in San Antonio is offering solar as a standard feature."

[Jim Bastoni](#), partner at Imagine Homes, said the company has 32 lots in the first phase of the development, and all homes will come with a 1.44 kilowatt system. That takes up about a 12-foot by 12-foot portion of the roof. Homebuyers will be eligible for a \$4,200 federal tax credit, based on the approximate \$14,000 value of the basic system.

"Everything we've done has been about energy efficiency and building a better envelope of the house," Bastoni said. "The last piece, the icing on the cake, is the solar."

Depending on the orientation of the home to the sun and the roofline, homeowners can opt to upgrade to as much as a 5 kilowatt system.

Solar shingles cost about as much as more traditional solar panels — around \$4 per watt — and are eligible for the same rebates from CPS Energy, as well as the tax credit, Bastoni said.

At Willis Ranch, the price of the 1.44 kilowatt solar package is built into the price of the home. Imagine would keep the CPS rebate and the homeowner would be eligible for the \$4,200 federal tax credit based on the \$14,000 value of the system.

If additional shingles are added, the same economic model applies. Imagine Homes charges homebuyers the difference between the cost of the shingles and the CPS rebates, which can be added onto the mortgage, and the homebuyer gets the federal tax credit.

Dow's solar shingle is flat, much like a regular shingle, but it has a shiny look.

Dan Pezolt, marketing director for Dow Solar, said about one year ago, the company rolled out the product in a Denver neighborhood but wanted to partner with a San Antonio community because of CPS Energy.

“CPS is very progressive and supportive of solar energy,” Pezolt said. “That's what made San Antonio an attractive place for our launch.”

The utility has invested in solar generation, and offers a relatively generous rebate to customers for a portion of the cost of adding solar — as much as \$25,000 for residential and \$100,000 for commercial solar installations

Home prices in Willis Ranch start in the \$270,000 range. The solar shingles have a 20-year warranty from Dow.

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