

[Chowchilla almond huller installs solar system](#)



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Minturn Huller Cooperative, Inc., recently integrated a solar electric system at its plant in Chowchilla.

The earth-friendly, technological upgrade will allow the company to produce an estimated 788 megawatt hours per year, saving Minturn about \$40,000 in electricity costs per year.

“Our facility runs an electric-intensive process that removes hulls and shells from nuts 24-hours a day, seven days a week from August to November,” said Jeff Hamilton, general manager with Minturn Huller. “As the agricultural community continues to see costs rise year after year, utilizing clean solar energy will allow us to better manage our budgets over the long term without sacrificing process quality.”

Canadian Solar, based in Ontario, Canada, was the provider of Minturn’s system, equipping the project with 2,700 “e-Modules,” the silicon cells that capture the sun’s energy. The solar panels take up two complete acres of space.

Merced-based Cenergy Power installed the project, and has seen an increasing amount of such undertakings.

“We are seeing more and more agricultural companies turning to solar energy solutions to help fuel their energy-intensive processes,” said Bill Pham, CEO of Cenergy Power. “This is the second (such) project for Cenergy Power in the last calendar quarter.”

The installation represents one of the largest solar projects in Madera County to-date, according to the California Solar Initiative. Minturn Huller provides hulling and shelling to more than 260 almond growers throughout the Central Valley.