

Solar

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there with 230,000," said Rountree, who sees solar energy as a way to reduce the burden on the state's electric distribution system. "We believe Fairfield County has a strong demographics for this. It has a high level of affluence. Our goal is to build an infrastructure to get solar business going in Fairfield County."

Rountree has set what he said is a conservative goal of 500 solar panel systems in the county by 2010.

One of Pizzi and Rountree's challenges will be to educate building officials, architects and installers about solar panel installation.

The idea that Connecticut's

sky is cloudy too often, preventing dependable use of solar panels, is a myth, said Charles Moret, managing director of investments for the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund.

"It's a clean technology and here today. It works in Connecticut. We have as many sunny days as Miami," Moret said. "Our goals also is to create jobs in Connecticut."

He noted that the Westport Country Playhouse's construction plan includes photovoltaic panels, and the city of Stamford also uses in solar technology.

With the assistance of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund, Stamford has installed a bank of photovoltaic solar panels on the roof of its recycling

center. A dedication ceremony is planned next week.

Solar panels also are being considered for the Academy of Information Technology, a Stamford magnet school.

Yoav Palatnik, director of business development at Energy 360, a Stamford energy conservation firm, said his company was involved in the installation of a solar-powered lighting system at Kosciuszko Park in Stamford.

Energy 360 is planning solar panel projects in Redding and Norwalk.

"The state assistance is fantastic," Palatnik said, predicting that there will be more use of solar, wind and fuel cell energy in the future. "A lot depends on the price of a barrel of oil."