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<http://gapersblock.com/mechanics/2014/09/30/uptown-welcomes-600000-solar-panel-project/>

## Uptown Welcomes \$600,000 Solar Panel Project

By Becky Schultz



*Solar Panels on top of ICA GreenRise Building  
Photo credit: Seva Gandhi*

The Institute of Cultural Affairs' GreenRise building in Uptown made headlines last year when it was given landmark status by the City of Chicago. Now it's drawn the city's attention again, this time by installing 500 solar panels on its roof. ICA GreenRise is the first non-profit and the only building outside of the Loop to participate in this initiative, joining the Shedd Aquarium as the two largest solar panel installations on commercial buildings in Chicago.

The 166,000-square-foot building was originally a four-story structure built for the Mutual Insurance Company by Fugard & Knapp in 1921, is now the largest nonprofit service center in the Midwest. The ICA's green initiative started in August 2012, when they accepted an invitation from Mayor Emanuel to join 47 others in the Retrofit Chicago Commercial Buildings Initiative, committing to cut energy use by at least 20 percent.

It received Energy Star Certification in 2014 and was part of the Open House Chicago Sustainability Trail sponsored by ComEd. The solar panels were installed by Hardt Electric, Inc., a Chicago-based company, on 35,000 square feet of roof space. ICA received a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation as well as matching funds to finance the \$600,000 project.



*New painted sign on the back of the ICA GreenRise Building at 4750 N. Sheridan Rd.*

*Photo credit: Seva Gandhi*

The new technology, unveiled last Wednesday, will enable the ICA's building at 4750 N. Sheridan to reduce dependency on electricity by 23 percent, saving up to \$16,000 annually.

"We added the solar panel because of the crisis we are facing in the world today," said ICA CEO Terry Bergdall at the ribbon cutting. "The challenge was to find a practical way to make this happen. The key is to change the mental image of what 'return on investment' means. It goes beyond numbers to doing something for the greater good. ICA is dedicated to building community and connecting other organizations for long term care of the earth."

"The Institute of Cultural Affairs GreenRise Building is an iconic structure and much more...ICA created a network supporting organizations working on sustainability that is strengthening each of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods," said City of Chicago Chief Sustainability Officer Karen Weigert.