

Let the sunshine in Major hotel paves the way in solar

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Pangelinan

A new player in the commercial solar market in the islands has secured a number of valuable contracts on Guam.

Its first client to go live with a project is a top hotel in the island's largest tourist district of Pleasure Island on Pale San Vitores Road in Tumon

The Outrigger Guam Beach Resort's photovoltaic system is being installed by o3 Energy Marianas, with installation due to finish at the end of July.

The project will bring solar power to Guam's hospitality industry. Outrigger General Manager Steven M. Solberg told the Journal, "As far as we know, we are the first."

Solberg said he is happy with the project for a number of reasons.

"It ties in so well to Outrigger's mantra — taking care of the ocean and taking care of the coral reefs and sea and keeping the water clean. Solar energy is such a natural for us to be a leader in clean energy."

While the solar project is a significant investment, o3's installation comes with a 25-year warranty. "It is guaranteed to survive the storms up to 150 miles per hour," Solberg said. He spoke highly of the property owners for deciding on the solar project. "The Ysraels have been very supportive and very excited about this," he said.



The o3 solar project at the Outrigger Guam Beach Resort is due to be completed by about July 21, according to hotel executives Steven M. Solberg (left), general manager, and Mohamed Jiffry, director of property services. Photo by Maureen N. Maratita

As an added benefit, Solberg said, "It's actually an improvement to the look of the roof. Hotel roofs are typically not very attractive to look down to." The hotel will no longer power wash the roof to improve the outlook from rooms, he said.

A television screen in the hotel lobby will show guests how much power is being produced.

The roof-top system is on the 5th floor roof of about 2,500 square meters over the lobby, the Bamboo Bar and part of the terrace. It is being installed by o3 Energy Solutions Marianas.

Mohamed Jiffry, director of property services at Outrigger, said the o3 team is easy to work with and update Outrigger regularly on progress. o3's technical role will not finish at installation of the project, he said. "Every month they will come to maintain it."

Solberg said the price of power is high and now is “so much higher than it’s ever been.”

The Outrigger solar installation has 400 panels of 990 millimeters by 1,956 millimeters, or just shy of 39 inches by 77 inches. Panels are laid flat for optimum efficiency. “It generates about 22,000 kilowatts per month and about 270,000 kilowatts per year,” Jiffry said. Outrigger consumes about 650,000 kilowatts per month, he said. Aside from being part of the hotel’s energy strategy and savings, the solar generation will reduce the hotel’s reliance on generator power during island outages, Jiffry said.

The installation was planned about a year ago and has taken about two months, including weather delays and permitting, he said. Outrigger has three GPA lines that feed into the property, Jiffry said. GPA will change the Outrigger meter so it reflects net metering.

“GPA has limited us to 100 kilowatts per meter,” he said. The installation is producing about 135 kilowatts per meter. “These panels produce high voltage; they convert with inverters to 480 volts/3 phase,” Jiffry said.

Executives at o3 Marianas are Matthew T. Giger, president; Dylan P. Byerly, vice president of operations; Bryon Cepeda, vice president of technology; and Karl A. Pangelinan, vice president of sales. Byerly is also managing partner of Byerly & Cook Co., which does business as Rhino Linings Guam. Pangelinan was formerly the administrator at the Guam Economic Development Authority and the general manager of the Guam Visitors Bureau.

“The fund that we represent — and that’s really the financial backing — they specialize in systems of certain sizes. The commercial sector here on Guam fits perfectly into that,” Pangelinan said. “You’re looking at larger, more complex solutions,” he told the Journal. “It’s because of that it’s attractive to o3.”

The Marianas unit has the backing of its group, he said, and is well prepared on-island for a slate of projects. “We’ve got a full design and engineering team; we’ve got an installation team,” he said. “It’s a nice blend of local talent that is merged with our off-island professionals.”

While the Journal was not supplied with the cost of the Outrigger project, o3 has allocated funds for a significant workload on Guam. “We entered the market with the ability to fund roughly \$60 million worth of projects,” Pangelinan said. o3 would be able to apply the federal solar tax credit or investment tax credit of 30% on solar projects. “To the end user, they are realizing their month-to-month savings on utilities.”

o3 offers Power Purchase Agreements to clients. “We build out the system; it’s at no capital outlay for our customers,” he said. “When you’re looking at commercial space, you’re dealing with larger size systems that can run into millions of dollars for installation.”

The group offers other energy options, Pangelinan said, such as carport installations. “We’ll be offering progressive solutions down the line, such as electric car charging stations. A couple of our customers are actually interested in that,” he said.

o3 is sourcing business in Hawaii, where it also has a partnership for the residential market. Tanota Partners, which owns the Outrigger and other hotel properties on Guam retained o3 early on. “Tanota Partners and the Ysrael family were the first to sign with us,” he said. “Outrigger can now truly boast that they are green.”

The Dusit Thani Guam will follow the Outrigger with its own solar installation, Pangelinan said. That may be bigger than the Outrigger’s.

“Another client that really saw the benefit is MVP Enterprises,” he said.

Solar installations planned at MVP properties include the U.S. District Court of Guam and both buildings of the Public Defenders Service Corp.

o3 is headquartered in Dallas, Texas and began business in 2011. It is a member of the Solar Energy Industries Association and the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners. o3 clients include Volkswagen, Hyundai and Chase, according to its website.

According to Journal files the region has seen other solar installations.

- In November 2015, the Marianas Business Plaza in Saipan completed the installation of 2,400 solar panels.
- Louis Vuitton's Tumon Sands Global Store in Guam installed 210 solar panels in March 2012 and was the first in the LV chain to do so.
 - Palau Pacific Resort and Negellil Nature Isle Resort installed solar panels on their properties in 2011. **mbj**