

Solar power helps CableOrganizer save money, prepare for storms

BY KEVIN GALE

Tropical Storm Debby was a reminder that hurricane season has arrived, but one Fort Lauderdale business has put a green twist on its preparations.

CableOrganizer.com has installed 144 solar panels and 48 backup batteries that can provide enough power for mission-critical operations for up to two days, a news release said. The mission-critical components include computers, servers, lights, security systems, packing stations, product carousels and the air conditioning for the server room.

The \$170,000 solar-panel system, which took advantage of a \$15 million Florida Power & Light Co. incentive program, can provide upward of about \$500 worth of power a month. The meter rolls backward when excess power is sold to FPL.

CableOrganizer also installed a 1,000-gallon propane tank and 48-kilowatt generator, so operations could continue up to six months.

"While under normal conditions we will realize a five- to seven-year payoff for the system, in the event of a major hurricane that would otherwise completely shut down our business, payoff would be realized in as little as one day," CableOrganizer co-founder and COO Paul Holstein said.

Terry Paterson of Paterson Project Management said Holstein was unique among his



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CableOrganizer.com VP Juan Ribero shows the newly installed solar panels.

clients, who usually do not seek the versatility the CableOrganizer installation offers.

The typical grid-tie solar power system, which is 90 percent of Paterson's installations, has to shut down if the utility loses power to avoid shocking workers who are doing repairs, he said. Unfortunately, that leaves the system owner without power.

The CableOrganizer system has a switch to disconnect from the grid if the power goes out, and the batteries store the solar power, said Paterson, also a general contractor that builds homes. The generators can also run the central air conditioning if Holstein opts to do so.

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