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In the News

Clean Solar named in top 7 solar contractors in Santa Clara County

San Jose, CA - Business partners Randy Zechman and Jeff Ritchey of Clean Solar in San Jose, California, have been friends for eight years, and entered the solar field from very diverse industries. Randy Zechman has a degree in Marketing and Management and is an entrepreneur who has created a number of successful businesses, the most recent of which is, of all things, the largest chocolate fountain rental company in the country. Jeff Ritchey has degrees in Geology and Viticulture, and is a wine consultant and winemaker in his own right.

A Green Vision for the Future

Randy and Jeff became interested in the solar electric field when they realized that they could combine their diverse talents in business and science to address what they see as the biggest problems facing our planet: global warming and the energy crisis. Their resolve was strengthened when they attended a presentation on global warming by former Vice President Al Gore. Randy and Jeff spent six months researching everything about the solar industry and planning their joint solar design and installation business down to the last detail. After careful consideration, the partners founded Clean Solar in 2007.

Beyond their dedication to sustainable technology and alternative energy, Randy and Jeff bring something Randy finds unusual in the contracting business as a whole: strong business acumen and skill in marketing, customer service and the art of managing

employees. Randy feels that many contractors are excellent craftsmen, but may not be as talented in customer service as they are in their trade. Randy and Jeff bring many combined decades of strong, customer-focused experience to Clean Solar, and they've already seen that their skill has brought them incredible success as solar installers.

Clean Solar's focus on clean, renewable energy is clear; however, Randy and Jeff also focus on creating excellent jobs for their designers and installers, by paying them well, giving them credit, and not overworking them to make a quick buck. Their fostering of a rewarding work environment extends to offering ownership opportunities to their employees. In essence, Randy and Jeff want all of their employees to feel empowered to feel proud about every aspect of their work.

Clean Solar also works to make solar photovoltaic installations easy and affordable for their customers. In part, Randy and Jeff see their role as educational, because they want people to understand the real benefits—both financial and environmental—of becoming energy independent. To this end, they work closely with customers to ensure the best fit between system and need. Clean Solar also offers a unique money-back energy production guarantee: If your system doesn't produce at least 95 percent of the energy you contracted for in its first five years, they will pay you for the missing kilowatts. Clean Solar also offers an extra 2 years over the industry standard warranties (of 10 years) on inverters and workmanship. Randy and Jeff also take an extra step in helping their customers take advantage of the rebates available for solar: They will facilitate all of the paperwork and collection chores, and credit you for your full rebate even before it arrives.

Going the Extra Mile

As another sign of their dedication to making the world a better place, Clean Solar donates \$500 to charity for every solar installation they complete. These donations can be made to a charity of the customer's choice, or to a list of four of Randy and Jeff's favorite charities: The Sierra Club, The Audubon Society, The National Wildlife Foundation, and the pioneering micro-loan organization, The Grameen Foundation.

As he looks ahead, Randy Zechman holds great hope for solar photovoltaics, "This is an incredible growth industry, and we're so happy to be a part of it—to educate our customers and the community, to install the best systems at the most reasonable price, and to create a customer service model that actually betters the world. As a lifelong entrepreneur, I business fascinating, but this is one of the rare industries you can feel good about for all the right reasons. We can have a positive impact in every way."

-Courtesy The Prime Buyer's Report

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