

A path to sustainability for Illinois businesses

Economic, operational and social advantages of solar and battery investments



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Brian Haug unites his passion for renewable energy and experience in electrical construction to deliver green solutions for Illinois businesses.

Associated with reduced carbon emissions, environmental stewardship and social responsibility, sustainability is more than a buzzword; it's a business imperative.

Companies in Illinois across many industries – from manufacturing to distribution, retail, health care and government – can benefit and be more sustainable by utilizing unused rooftop real estate for solar panels and by transitioning from diesel generators to battery storage. Solar energy emits zero carbon, and a modest two-panel solar array can offset one metric ton of CO₂ annually, equal to 1,100 lbs. of burned coal. Adopting renewable energy practices not only supports sustainability but also drives long-term cost savings, unlocks new revenue streams, supports energy independence and strengthens competitive advantage.

The values of sustainability are core to why I founded Continental Energy Solutions (CES) in 2009 with a vision to make Illinois a leader in clean energy. At this time, CES has surpassed 100 megawatts of installed solar and over 50 megawatt hours of battery storage. More than advocates, we lead by example: Our own facility features a rooftop solar installation paired with battery storage, demonstrating the benefits of clean energy.

Our roots trace back to our sister company, Continental Electrical Construction Company (CECCo), founded in 1912, which played a role in

shaping Chicago's skyline with projects like Willis Tower, the Merchandise Mart and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. We leverage CECCo's 700-strong union workforce and their history of innovation and expertise to help our clients achieve meaningful sustainability goals.

The financial case for solar and battery storage

As electricity prices continue to rise, straining budgets, cost reduction remains one of the most compelling reasons for Illinois businesses to invest in solar and battery storage. By installing solar panels, companies can significantly cut energy usage, and battery storage further enhances savings by reducing capacity and transmission charges on your bill. Along with saving money, solar and battery storage projects are an excellent investment opportunity. Paybacks typically range from two to three years, with 15-year savings and revenue in the millions of dollars. Internal rates of return can range from 15% to 25%, making this a low-risk, high-reward investment. Additionally, current state and federal incentives can reimburse up to 70% to 80% of capital expenditure within the first year of operation. While supporting grid stabilization, batteries can be a significant source of revenue.

Backup power for your facility

As extreme weather events and aging infrastructure lead to power outages, grid reliability is a growing concern. Businesses dependent on the power grid risk operational disruptions and financial losses,

while solar energy, paired with battery storage, provides a reliable and resilient alternative for ensuring continuity during outages and avoid costly downtime.

Being sustainable is a differentiator in today's market. Companies that demonstrate environmental responsibility build brand loyalty and position themselves favorably for employees, contracts and investors. Investing in solar and battery technology now provides long-term strategic advantages and establishes your company as one that cares about climate change and global warming.

The future of business is sustainable

Renewable energy is not a trend – it is the future of business. With strong financial incentives, long-term economic gains, enhanced resilience and a competitive edge, solar and battery technology is a strategic investment for many sectors.

At CES, we distinguish ourselves by offering full-service engineering, procurement and construction of commercial solar and battery storage. Our integrated approach ensures seamless execution, from interconnection and maintenance to end-of-life recycling and refitting. Our team of NABCEP-certified installers, professional engineers (PEs), skilled draftsmen, project delivery specialists and experienced project managers guide clients through every stage of implementation.



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