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From the Phoenix Business Journal:

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Putting campgrounds on the grid: Solar company bringing energy to the great outdoors

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Campers at the Lazydays Kampground of America site in Tucson can expect solar-powered facilities in the fall.

PowerParasol, a Chandler-based solar structure company, will build 28-foot solar structures at a KOA site to provide shade and energy to the campground. The structures will provide shade and allow for barbecuing and campfires.

KOA wanted solar structures for shade to encourage campers to come for a longer portion of the year, said Bob Boscamp, president of Strategic Solar Energy, the parent company of PowerParasol.

The project is predicted to take 90 days and will occur during the summer, when there is less traffic to the Tucson campground.

“Shovels are going into the ground this week,” said Boscamp.

The design will be comparable to Arizona State University’s parking lot 59, where PowerParasol solar structures are tall enough to bring shade to the area while allowing visitors to tailgate and barbecue without injuring the panels.

Campfires and grilling will still be available at campsites because of the height of the structure, said Boscamp. The structures will be tall enough and have air flow between the panels, which make small fires acceptable.



PICASA

A rendering of the PowerParasol structures at the Tucson campground, courtesy of Debartolo Architects.

“You can’t have a 50-foot bonfire going, but there will be fire rings where campers can have fires without fear,” Boscamp said.

Excess energy not used by the panels will be fed back into the local power grid, according to PowerParasol. The company said its structures would produce 1.75 million kilowatt hours of energy, enough to power 150 homes.

Boscamp said the purpose of the project is to give large RVs clean energy, where the PowerParasols are expected to provide up to 80 percent of power consumption by the facility.

Additionally, PowerParasol said its structures are able to pay for the construction costs by 60 percent or more by the energy collected by the panels.

Boscamp said he is optimistic about the expansion into campgrounds. PowerParasol already has structures at Arizona State University’s Tempe campus and a Fry’s grocery store parking lot.

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