

## **Building Solar Panels On The Strip**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A California company is planning to build a \$20 million manufacturing plant for solar power cells in the Las Vegas area.

The operation will employ about 278 workers, according to officials at Amonix Inc., which is based in Seal Beach, Calif.

The plan was announced Saturday during a dedication ceremony in Henderson for a 308-kilowatt solar installation that the company sold to Southern Nevada Water Authority.

Amonix CEO Brian Robertson said workers will make concentrated photovoltaic solar equipment — the same type of solar cells used to power satellites. The panels convert sunlight into electricity.

Amonix got \$9.5 million in investment tax credits this year from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Of that, about \$5.9 million will go toward the manufacturing plant in Nevada, company officials said.

The equipment built at the plant will convert photons of sunlight into electricity just like photovoltaic systems used atop residential homes, Robertson said. The system tracks the sun across the sky and makes adjustments about every six seconds.

"Just like a sunflower, it follows the sun," Robertson said.

Much of the equipment is sold to electric utilities and for large commercial installations.

The company is coming to southern Nevada because "we wanted something that's close to where we're going to ship," Robertson said.

A specific site for the plant hasn't been selected. The company is looking at three buildings in the Las Vegas area for its manufacturing operation. All contain more than 150,000 square feet.

The company also has asked the Nevada Commission on Economic Development for tax breaks available for new businesses in the state.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said at the ceremony that these types of projects are important for diversifying Nevada's economy, which he said is too dependent on casinos.

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He estimated that about 10,000 workers in southern Nevada are employed in the renewable energy business.

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