



## Low-income Woodland farming families go solar

Like many Americans, Alex Hernandez lost his home and his job in the aftermath of the recession. The former contractor, now truck driver, has four kids, and his paycheck goes to them.

Hernandez lives in a four-bedroom apartment with his family in a Woodland complex, but it's not like the other apartment buildings – this one is 100 percent solar powered.

That means big savings for Hernandez and everyone else who lives here.

“I went from 257 bucks a month to \$7,” Hernandez said. “And, I have my A/C on all day!”

Sounds too good to be true, but it's not. It's called Mutual Housing at Spring Lake. It's a community built specifically for low-income farm workers and their families. Their rent is reduced, and so is the utility bill thanks to solar panels built on the rooftops.

A color-coded device inside the home lets residents know where they're at with power usage. But they don't have to worry about supply. Project manager Vanessa Guerra said there is plenty to go around, even on cloudy days.

“Even if there is overcast, there are still UV rays that are coming through the clouds and feeding into the system, therefore, it's still producing energy,” she said.

Many landlords and developers are hesitant to install solar panels because of the high cost.

But a new forecast put out by Bloomberg New Energy Finance said over the next decade, solar prices will plummet and will become competitive for the entire world.



The apartments buildings at the Mutual Housing at Spring Lake complex all have solar panels on the roofs, driving energy costs down for renters. (Photo: Lee Maxwell/News10)