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## Solar panels provide power for 19 hours of off-the-grid home theater entertainment each week

The Home Theater Specialist of America (HTSA) buying group is helping its members sell a high-end home theater to clients who are concerned about energy usage.

Its Guiltless Green Home Theater was unveiled this week at the group's annual spring meeting in Chandler, Ariz. It is the **first home theater powered by solar panels**, which provide 19 hours of off-the-grid entertainment every week. That's the equivalent of watching about 10 major motion pictures a week without consuming any energy generated by conventional power sources, such as coal or nuclear.



Currently, homeowners can receive a 30 percent tax write-off for the cost of solar panels. In some states, like Pennsylvania and North Carolina, there is an additional state tax incentive of 35 percent. HTSA's Guiltless Green Home Theater is the buying group's first green home theater project, and is a case study in the use of renewable energy for the consumer

electronics industry. The showcase project demonstrates to consumers, custom installers, and consumer electronics vendors that the costs and environmental impact of energy consumed by home theater systems can now be offset using readily available solar technology.

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## Tech Tip Of The Month - Windows 7 Tips

**Record Problems.** The Problem Steps Recorder (PSR) is a great new feature that helps in troubleshooting a system. When Remote Assistance is not possible, type psr in the Instant Search and it will launch the recorder. Now perform the actions needed to recreate the problem and each click will record the screen and the step. Even add comments. Once complete, the PSR compiles the whole thing into an MHTML file and zips it up so that it can be e-mailed for analysis to the network admin.

**Make Training Videos.** Use a tool like Camtasia to record short, two to three minute video tutorials.

**Cut the Clutter.** Press Windows+Home to minimize all but the current window, removing background clutter and letting you focus on that report your boss has been bugging you about.

**Go Live.** Apps no longer available on Window 7 (Messenger, Mail, Writer, Photo Gallery, Movie Maker, Family Safety and others) have been moved to Live Essentials downloadable

applications, at download.live.com.

**Put It on Old Stuff.** One not-so-obvious tip is that you should attempt to install it everywhere. One user has a 6-year-old laptop that originally shipped with Windows XP. He could never get Windows Vista to install on it. But Windows 7 installed without complaint and runs extremely smooth. Granted, there are some Windows 7 features he can't take advantage of because the processor lacks certain features, but these are minor issues considering the laptop now has life again.

### Inside the Technology Advisor

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- ◆ New Energy Efficiency Law for CA
- ◆ Voice Controlled Devices

### CA Requires TV's to be More Energy Efficient

The California Energy Commission unanimously voted to require all new TVs up to 58 inches to be more energy efficient beginning in 2011. Only a quarter of all TVs currently on the market meet that standard.

The commission estimates that TVs account for about 10% of a home's electricity use. Commissioners say energy efficiency standards are the cheapest and easiest way to save electricity.

TVs larger than 58 inches, which account for no more than 3 percent of the market, would not be covered by the rule, a concession to independent retailers that sell high-end home-theater TVs.

Environmental groups said the rules would cut California's power bill by \$1 billion a year, avoiding the need to build a 500-megawatt power plant.

Some manufacturers said implementing a power standard will cripple innovation, limit consumer choice and harm California retailers. This is because consumers could simply buy TVs out of state or order them online.

As an example of the new standards, all new 42-inch TVs must use less than 183 watts by 2011 and less than 116 watts by 2013. That's considerably more efficient than flat-screen TVs placed on the market in recent years. The Sharp Aquos LCD 42-inch LC-42SB45UT uses 230 watts. Whereas the Sharp Aquos LED 46-inch LC-46LE700UN uses only 90 watts. That's less electricity used than to run your electric can opener. LCDs now account for about 90 percent of the 4

million TVs sold in California annually.

*Some TVs already meet the early standards. About three-quarters of the TVs — more than 1,050 models — sold today comply with the 2011 California standards, and more than 300 comply with the 2013 standard, according to the Energy Commission.*

California has led the nation in setting efficiency requirements for dishwashers, washing machines and other household appliances as a way to address the state's growing electricity demand.

Each energy-efficient TV would save a household roughly \$30 a year in lowered electricity costs. If all 35 million TVs watched in the state were replaced with more efficient sets, Californians would save \$8.1 billion over 10 years, according to the Energy Commission report.

TVs account for about 2 percent of California's overall electricity use. Requiring them to be more energy efficient would save enough electricity to power 864,000 single-family homes a year.

The electricity savings could help California meet the goals of its 2006 global warming law, which calls for the state to cut greenhouse gases 25% by 2020. Gov. Schwarzenegger praised the commission's action as another signal of California's leadership on environmental matters. He also noted that *our state's per-capita electricity consumption has remained flat over the last three decades while energy consumption nationwide has increased.*

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"We all love high-end gadgets and gizmos, but no matter what, they still use a lot of energy," says Glikes.

"When people see this project, they'll learn that a solar home theater isn't something out of science fiction. It's a practical solution we can install today, and one that ultimately pays for itself."

The Guiltless Green Home Theater was installed in a spec home at the Whitehorse residential development in Newtown Square, Pa. Four solar panels were mounted on a southern facing roof of the home. They provide 700 watts per hour during the four and a half usable hours of sunlight each day, for a

total of about 22,000 watts over the course of a week.

#### Energy Efficiency Meets High Performance

"The Guiltless Green Home Theater proves you don't have to cut corners to cut energy use," says Glikes. "It features some of the highest quality equipment available today, including a Sharp XV-Z15000 front projector, 100-inch Stewart Filmscreen, six Speakercraft in-wall speakers and subwoofer, Integra A/V receiver, Blu-ray player, green power conditioner, lighting by Lutron, control by Universal Remote Control, wiring by Monster Cable and Salamander furniture."

Glikes does not think HTSA members should necessarily go out and get an electrician's license so they can install this package. On the contrary, he recommends they **partner with a solar panel installer** primarily because of labor rates. "Most solar panel installation companies charge between \$50 and \$60 per hour. That hourly rate is well below what our members typically charge," he says.

For more info on **California's Rebate Program for Wind & Fuel Cell Renewable Energy Electric-Generating Systems** visit <http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/erprebate/index.html>

## Voice Activated iPod Controller

Do you love the ability to listen to pod casts and music at your convenience, but hate the way you have to control the menu and the volume? Want to listen and change tracks hands free? This tool is a terrific way to make listening to your iPod even more enjoyable!

- Great for people who find the menu functions too difficult to handle with their fingers and for people with low vision.

- Compatible with iPod touch, iPod classic, iPod video, iPod nano (1st through 4th Gen), iPod mini, iPod photo.
- Not compatible with the iPod Shuffle because it uses a USB connection.



### The Voice Control for iPod can perform the following commands:

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| • Play Music  | • Rewind         |
| • Stop Music  | • Previous Track |
| • Volume Up   | • Next Track     |
| • Volume Down |                  |

More info at: [www.dynamic-living.com/product/voice-activated-ipod-controller/](http://www.dynamic-living.com/product/voice-activated-ipod-controller/)

## Voice Enabled Remote Control



Control your Windows Media Center via voice with the Amulet Voice-enabled Remote Control. Record and watch TV, listen to your favorite music, and view DVDs, videos and photos, all using simple voice commands.

### How it Works

- You pick up the remote and speak a command such as "Play Artist Rolling Stones".
- The built-in microphone transmits your voice to the software in your Windows Media Center.
- It includes advanced position sensing technology, which means that it only listens when you talk to it, not when you're chatting with friends or family.
- Use it as a traditional remote by pressing buttons. Lift it upright, however, and you activate the built-in Wireless Digital Audio link.

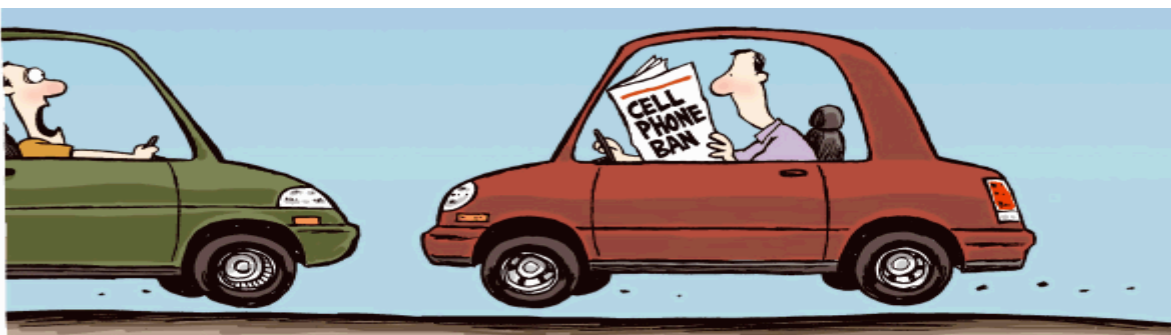


- The microphone logo lights red, and you can talk directly to your Media Center. Everything you say is transmitted to Amulet's software, where it is analyzed and recognized in real time. When you're finished talking, simply lower the remote and Amulet stops listening automatically.

### Features

- Wondering what song is playing? Ask "What song is that?" Amulet will call out the song name. ("This is 'Superfriends' by All Mighty Senators from the album 'Raw Power Live'")
- Navigate TV guide by voice ("Record ABC Next Tuesday at 7 PM")
- Instant access to video timeline ("Skip to 1 hour and 10 minutes", "Skip over ads")
- Infra-red learning – teach Amulet to control any of your other audio visual equipment

More info at: [www.amuletdevices.com/index.php/Features/products.html](http://www.amuletdevices.com/index.php/Features/products.html)





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- DirectTV - Delivering the best HD channels - and more of them than anyone.
- QuickBooks Certified
- Verizon Authorized Dealer - Save on Business Plans

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### **Random Facts**

- Bill Gates' first business was Traff-O-Data, a company that created machines which recorded the number of cars passing a given point on a road.
- Only one satellite has been ever been destroyed by a meteor: the European Space Agency's Olympus in 1993.
- A chip of silicon a quarter-inch square has the capacity of the original 1949 ENIAC computer, which occupied a city block.
- According to security equipment specialists, security systems that utilize motion detectors won't function properly if walls and floors are too hot. When an infrared beam is used in a motion detector, it will pick up a person's body temperature of 98.6 degrees compared to the cooler walls and floor. If the room is too hot, the motion detector won't register a change in the radiated heat of that person's body when it enters the room and breaks the infrared beam. Your home's safety might be compromised if you turn your air conditioning off or set the thermostat too high while on summer vacation.

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