

# Texas Ford and Chevy Dealerships Drive Sustainable Savings with Solar

SUNPOWER®



## Challenge

Automobile dealerships are extremely energy-intensive—with heavy use of bright lighting and temperature-controlled showrooms. In Central Texas, Covert Auto was looking for a way to offset rising electricity costs and reduce their environmental footprint.

## SunPower's Solution

Working with the team at Freedom Solar, the family-owned auto group decided to install two 62.8 kW SunPower® systems on the roofs of its Ford and Chevy dealerships in Hutto, TX. The “flush-mounted systems” are expected to produce enough energy to power more than half of the dealerships’ electricity year-round.

## Customer Benefit

The two arrays are expected to offset 53% of the dealerships’ electricity use and serve as a powerful reminder to customers, employees and the community of the Covert family’s commitment to sustainability. With high efficiency SunPower Panels, the system is expected to pay for itself in four years and generate clean energy for years to come.

## Quick Facts



**125.6 kW**  
Total System Size



**Rooftop**  
Installation Type



**\$500,000**  
Projected 25-Year Savings



**53%**  
Expected Electricity Offset

“Electricity represents a large monthly expense for us and solar helps reduce that expense exponentially.”

Dan Covert  
Sales Manager  
Covert Ford-Hutto

## Gearing Up for the Long Haul with Solar

In Central Texas, summer isn't just one season long. Temperatures often stay north of 90 degrees for months on end—and powering a well-lit, air-conditioned automobile dealership can consume a large portion of a company's operating budget.



Founded in 1909, Covert Auto has served the Central Texas community for five generations. This year, company leaders made a strategic decision to install solar on two of its Hutto dealerships: Covert Ford and Covert Chevy.

The Coverts are big believers in community stewardship, having donated land for public use and supporting several area charities. But they didn't choose to put solar on their dealerships' rooftops for environmental reasons alone. They went solar because it made good financial sense.

“Electricity represents a large monthly expense for us and solar helps reduce that expense exponentially,” said Dan Covert, sales manager at Covert Ford-Hutto.

## Maximizing Returns for Auto Dealerships

“Going solar makes a lot of sense for auto dealerships, who own their buildings and want to lower operating expenses,” said Bret Biggart, managing director of Austin's Freedom Solar Power, a SunPower Master dealer, who designed and installed the dealerships' solar arrays. “This project is a major milestone, because Covert Ford of Hutto is now officially the first Ford dealership in Texas to go solar.”

The Covert Ford and Chevy dealerships are located next to each other in Hutto, TX – and both dealerships now have a 62.8-kilowatt rooftop array for a total 125.6 kW system. Combined, the systems feature a total of 384 SunPower P-Series 340-watt panels—known for their high efficiency, reliability and quality.

“Going solar makes a lot of sense for auto dealerships, who own their buildings and want to lower operating expenses.”

Bret Biggart  
Managing Director  
Austin's Freedom Solar Power

Covert Auto self-financed the installations, preferring to avoid debt, and further offset costs with the 30 percent Federal Investment Tax Credit and a utility rebate of 20 percent of the total system cost. The combined system is expected to pay for itself in two years, and generate more than \$500,000 in savings over the system's life.



“In a highly competitive market, auto dealers are positioned to benefit from solar energy in numerous ways,” said Kyle Frazier, Freedom Solar’s Director of Sales. Nationally, auto dealerships combine to spend about \$2 billion annually on energy costs, according to the National Auto Dealers Association.

“Today, more automotive dealers are turning to solar as a way to alleviate energy expenditures, which are a direct result of energy-intensive, air-conditioned showrooms and highly lit lots accompanied by long operating hours,” Frazier said. “Dealerships are not only looking to reduce their operating costs and boost margins, but also to build a more sustainable future for their business.”

SunPower Corporation  
1.800.786.7693  
[sunpower.com/commercial-solar](http://sunpower.com/commercial-solar)