

# NOVATO ADVANCE

**Gelato in Novato!**

Time: 15:54:00  
High: 80°F  
Winds: 8mph

Currently: 80°F  
Low: 57°F

7-Day forecast

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Thursday, June 18, 2009

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**Festival of Art, Wine and Music goes solar; Main Stage powered by the sun**

By Mary Southall  
Marinscope Newspapers  
Wednesday, June 3, 2009 2:57 PM PDT

The 14 bands on the Main Stage at the June 13-14 Festival of Art, Wine and Music will draw all their power from a solar array, says Mark McLarry, co-founder of Sustainable Waves that is providing the solar array service under the auspices of major festival sponsor PG&E.

"The 1.8kw of solar panels produce electricity that is stored into a battery tank of 24 six-volt batteries," explains McLarry. "Powering the stage by using this array for two days avoids dumping 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere." For those who need an easier comparison, it's the equivalent of not driving a car for 2,200 miles.

Employing the term "sequestration" in its usage as the carbon dioxide absorbed by plants and changed to oxygen by photosynthesis, using the solar-array trailer for two days is equivalent to the annual sequestration of 132 trees, McLarry states.

"We provide clean, mobile power for the event industry, and educate people on how it works," McLarry adds. "Our company fits right in with what PG&E looks to do, which is to educate people on what they can do to use solar power to reduce their own carbon footprint."

More than 50 percent of solar installations in this country fall into territory covered by PG&E, McLarry believes.

Sustainable Waves provides the solar power for the San Anselmo Art and Wine Festival and for the Mill Valley Film Festival. The company is based in San Diego but has storage facilities in South San Francisco.

PG&E is also a big solar-power presence at the Marin County Fair and at the Raphael Theater.

Weather that is less than ideal is not a factor, McLarry says: "Even if the day is cloudy, we'll be able to provide power because the trailer will arrive charged."

Festival should draw huge crowds

Chelley Dallara of Eckerstrom Productions expects the Novato Festival of Art, Wine and Music to draw bigger-than-usual crowds this year. Dallara is the on-the-ground representative who organizes the food and arts vendors for the festival, and arranges musicians for the second stage that is set up near the Premium Wine Garden on Seventh Street. She has already produced several Bay Area springtime street fairs.

"Business at street fairs has been terrific this year," says Dallara. "Because the economy in general isn't so great, people are staying close to home instead of traveling to faraway places. They are looking for free, or inexpensive, things to do near their homes."

Attendance has been up at all the fairs she has arranged this spring, and she says vendor spaces at the Art, Wine and Music Festival are practically sold out. All the spots for jewelry vendors are taken for all her fairs for the rest of the year, she says.

Ford dealerships are a new sponsor

One of this year's new sponsors of the Festival of Art, Wine and Music is the Northern California Ford Dealers Association. After researching the festival's attendance and demographic, the 14-member board decided the AWM Festival was an ideal spot for its presence.



COURTESY PHOTO A trailer-mounted array of solar panels will power the Main Stage at the June 13-14 Festival of Art, Wine and Music in downtown Novato. This is the festival's 26th year in Novato.

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The association represents Ford dealerships from Fresno to Redding, including those in the Monterey and San Francisco Bay Areas.

Josh Townsend, a spokesman for major sponsor PG&E, agrees that the Novato festival has an ideal demographic.

"(The Novato Festival of Art, Wine and Music) has a great family feel," he says. "It is, and will continue to be, embedded in the community. It's a great platform to give people information on PG&E's commitment to the environment. That's what we are committed to, and will continue to strive for green technologies. We sponsor the solar stage, and we'll have a booth there (at the festival). Beyond providing energy and gas to residents, we're embedded in the community."

An eye to ADA

The public is reminded that, because this is an event where food is served, no dogs are allowed at the site except for service dogs.

Also, due to an ordinance of the City of Novato, there is no smoking at any outdoor public venue in Novato.

ADA-accessible portable restrooms will be widely available, and parking access for the handicapped has also been improved.

The festival takes place in downtown Novato Saturday and Sunday, June 13-14. Hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free. Wine, beer and other beverages will be available along with a variety of foods ranging from hot dogs to deep-fried calamari. The Prado Group sponsors a kids' play area. Arts and crafts for children will be available.

There is no admission fee, but activities such as pony rides require a nominal fee.

Marin Conservation Corps and Novato Disposal will provide recycling services.

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