

# CUSTOMER SUCCESS

CLIENT  
**HUFFMAN WELDING & MACHINE, INC.**

LOCATION  
**FORT MADISON, IA**



## **SOLAR IS SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION FOR SOUTHEAST IOWA COMPANY**

The Huffman family and Van Meter go way back. The Huffman's, who own a welding and machine company and three farm and home stores, have worked with Van Meter on various projects to improve their bottom line. So when the Huffman's wanted to see what solar power could do for them, they gave their old friends at Van Meter a call.



## CHALLENGE

At Huffman Welding and Machine, it costs money every time a spark flies. With the operation undergoing multiple expansions to accommodate new customers, company President, Michael Huffman, wanted to see if solar could be the answer to growing electrical costs.

"We've always been a company that's looking for sustainability," said Huffman. "Van Meter has been a partner of ours as a vendor for 30 years. They've helped us in lighting projects, and it was only natural to go with them and Mohrfeld Electric."

"Using Mohrfeld Electric has been an easy decision for us," Huffman said. "They've been there whenever we have a problem. They're quick to respond. They get with Van Meter to help us figure out if there's an issue."

Huffman sat down with Van Meter Renewable Energy Product Manager, Ethan Wollbrink, and Mohrfeld Electric President, Michael Mohrfeld, to see if solar could be the solution. While solar made sense on paper as a sustainable energy solution, there were still a couple obstacles. How to condense eight electrical meters down to one, and how to tie in the solar array—on the opposite end of the property—with the electrical service, had to be figured out. Van Meter's renewable energy team and Mohrfeld Electric developed a game plan.

## SOLUTION

"Van Meter has a little bit of the same philosophy we do," said Mohrfeld. "We just think outside of the box."

The first step was to reduce the eight electrical meters on the property down to one by installing a 1600-amp, 480-volt electrical service. This allowed the Huffman's to utilize net metering. With net metering, a solar power system owner is credited for energy they don't use.

The next step was getting innerduct from the upgraded electrical service to where the 660, 325-watt ground-mount solar panels would be installed.

"Michael [Mohrfeld] just underground bore right under our building with his equipment and hit the distribution panels so that challenge was alleviated," said Huffman.



### DID YOU KNOW?

**SOLAR ENERGY IS THE MOST ABUNDANT ENERGY RESOURCE ON EARTH** - 173,000 TERAWATTS OF SOLAR ENERGY STRIKES THE EARTH CONTINUOUSLY. THAT'S MORE THAN 10,000 TIMES THE WORLD'S TOTAL ENERGY USE.



**173,000**  
TERAWATTS OF  
SOLAR ENERGY



ACCORDING TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Van Meter supplied all the products and Mohrfeld handled the installation of the 208-kilowatt solar array. "Everything except for the rock we're standing on came from Van Meter on this particular project, including the electrical service," noted Mohrfeld.

"They put together a package that was more economical than we'd looked at in the past, with a quicker turnaround," explained Huffman.

---

**"They put together a package that was more economical than we'd looked at in the past, with a quicker turnaround." - Michael Huffman**

---

## THE RESULT

With \$33,500 per year in energy savings, along with a 30 percent federal tax credit and a \$20,000 state tax credit lowering the bill, Huffman Welding and Machine is looking at just a 4.5-year payback, which means it will be enjoying clean energy now and free energy just a few years down the road.

"When the field is paid off in the future, we should theoretically have free energy," said Huffman. "That may be, in a bad year, the only profit you make—what you save in utilities."

"The response from the community has been overly positive," Huffman said. "They believe it's a good ecological thing that we've done, and that's always been important to us."

The Huffman family was so pleased with the results from their first solar installation that they have since installed a 130-kilowatt solar power system at their Huffman Farm and Home store in Burlington, IA, and a 117-kilowatt system at their Fort Madison, IA, farm and home location.

"Knowing that the customer's got a zero-dollar electric bill, and they're going to have that moving forward; knowing you're doing the right thing for the environment—that's pretty big," said Mohrfeld.

"I think it will ultimately keep us in business for the years to come," said Huffman.



---

"Knowing that the customer's got a **zero-dollar electric bill**, and they're going to have that moving forward; knowing you're doing the right thing for the environment — that's pretty big."

- Michael Mohrfeld

---



## YOUR ENERGY SOLUTION

Van Meter Inc. provides expert advice in the selection and design of solar solutions and more. We welcome your call to discuss your next project. To speak with a Van Meter representative, call 1-800-247-1410. We'll quickly connect you with the person or information you need.



### Huffman Welding & Machine, Inc.

Huffman Welding & Machine, Inc. has been in business since 1971. The family-owned, Fort Madison, IA, manufacturing company specializes in fabrication, machining, sheet metal, and material cutting and serves the food, agricultural, and automotive industries among many others. The family also owns three Huffman's Farm and Home stores.

### Mohrfeld Electric

Mohrfeld Electric is a southeast Iowa based electrical company. It has experience with solar, residential, commercial, industrial, and low voltage projects and specializes in finding energy-efficient solutions for its customers.

### Van Meter Inc.

Van Meter Inc. is a 100-percent employee-owned distributor of electrical, automation, lighting, datacomm, power transmission, utility and clean energy supplies, services and solutions. Headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the company has 15 locations throughout the midwest.

Everything you need to succeed.

800.247.1410 | [vanmeterinc.com](http://vanmeterinc.com)

#### OUR PRODUCTS

