

Consider certification

The RISE™ CSRP™ certification may be a boon for the roofing industry

by John Schehl



The [Certified Solar Roofing Professional™ \(CSRP\) certification program](#), administered by [Roof Integrated Solar Energy™ \(RISE\) Inc.](#), recently celebrated its one-year anniversary. During the past year, the program has grown significantly and already is providing benefits to the roofing and solar industries and building owners. New careers; business opportunities for contractors, consultants and manufacturers; and energy cost savings to building owners are being realized.

PV update

There is little question that the roof-mounted photovoltaic (PV) industry is growing rapidly. According to the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), the U.S. solar market grew from \$3.6 billion in 2009 to \$6 billion in 2010. During this same period, national weighted-average PV system pricing fell 20.5 percent from \$6.45 per watt to \$5.13 per watt. In contrast to U.S. gross national product growth of only 2.8 percent, the U.S. solar market grew 67 percent in 2010.

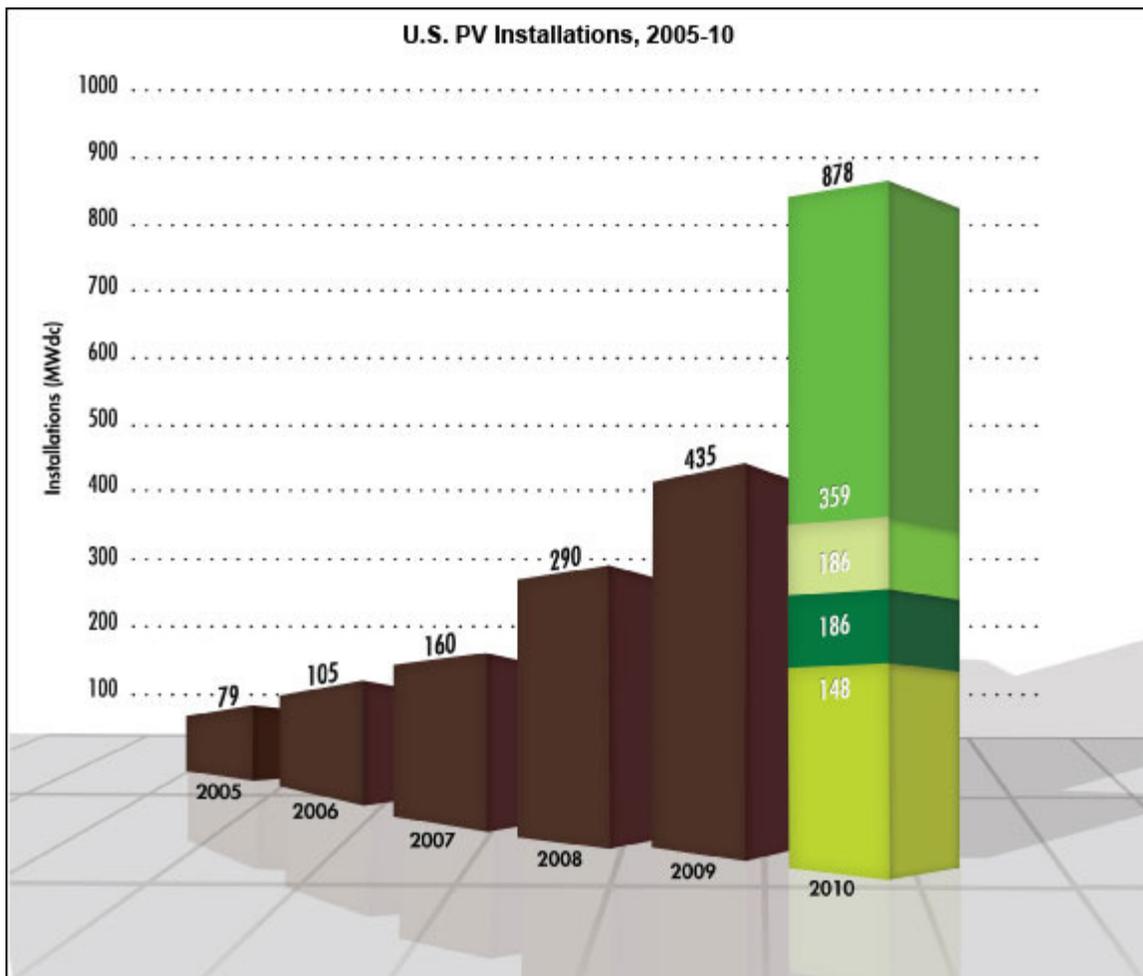
In the [figure on page 36](#), the Y-axis represents the total megawatts of PV installations in the U.S. during the past six years. The 2010 total more than doubled from the previous year. There is every reason to believe increased opportunities for roof-mounted PV installations will follow this trend.

However, rapid growth brings rapid change, and rapid change almost always includes growing pains and new industry issues and problems.

RISE board

NRCA and the [Center for Environmental Innovation in Roofing](#) became increasingly aware of specific industry issues and problems arising from the growth of roof-mounted PV installations. In response, both organizations' leadership created the [CSRP](#) credential in early 2010. In fall 2010, they appointed an initial slate of officers and members to create the [RISE](#) board of directors to administer the credential.

The board is composed of key stakeholder representatives from the roofing and solar industries, including solar integrators, roof system manufacturers, solar product manufacturers, contractors, consultants and design professionals. All board members are required to have a working knowledge of successful rooftop solar installation and maintenance. The board's primary goals are to provide a means of evaluating and certifying solar roofing professionals to support the widespread use of rooftop solar energy and provide the public with tools to identify skilled rooftop solar energy professionals.



Growth of U.S. PV installations according to the Solar Energy Industries Association

The board's immediate objectives are to promote the successful installation of roof-mounted PV systems for all stakeholders by staying current with industry best practices for roofing, safety, building codes and PV technologies; maintain and administer the [CSR](#)P certification in accordance with the Institute of Credentialing Excellence and National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) credentialing criteria; and enhance and promote the value of the [CSR](#)P certification to building owners, industry stakeholders and the general public.

The [RISE](#) board first met in October 2010. The important work of drafting governance policies and procedures immediately commenced along with developing a comprehensive plan of work and identifying staff.

In July, the board met again and began developing [CSR](#)P recertification criteria and a comprehensive communications and marketing campaign, as well as finalized several governance procedures. The recertification criteria will be published in October. The board also developed a process for managing and updating the [CSR](#)P certification exam. New members were inducted, including a representative from SunEdison, Beltsville, Md., one of the nation's largest solar integrators.

What is CSRP?

The **CSRP** credential is a voluntary certification for professionals who plan and oversee the installation of roof-mounted PV systems. It was developed in accordance with and endeavors to follow NCCA's Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs.

The **CSRP** credential helps protect building owners by ensuring roofing work is being performed by qualified individuals when it is done in conjunction with PV system installations. It does not attempt to convert roofing contractors or consultants into electricians or PV system engineers. The roofing industry knows best how to manufacture, design, install and maintain its systems safely.

What value does it offer?

The overarching value the **CSRP** credential offers is that it addresses the needs and concerns of all stakeholders, including building owners; helps ensure responsible roof-mounted PV installations; and ultimately helps advance the widespread adoption of solar technologies throughout the U.S. But the credential also delivers unique value to individual stakeholders.

Craig Silvertooth, the center's executive director, says: "The **RISE** credential presents an opportunity to direct building-integrated solar business to roofing contractors, roof consultants and other industry practitioners by making quality rooftop solar installations synonymous with our profession."

Professionals who achieve the **CSRP** credential can present themselves as knowledgeable about PV systems to the public.

Silvertooth adds: "The credential offers value to the public by helping ensure roof systems do their job—to keep buildings weatherproof—and do not suffer the consequences of unqualified people performing roofing work that results in voiding warranties or other collateral damage."

And Aaron Martin, president of DRI Commercial, Irvine, Calif., and current president of the **RISE** board, states: "The **RISE CSRP** program is valuable to all stakeholders by providing roof construction expertise and helping mitigate risk in the developing PV industry as it matures."

But the **CSRP** credential also offers personal value to roofing professionals, as expressed by Rick Cook, partner of ADC Engineering Inc., Hanahan, S.C., and current president of RCI Inc. Cook was among the first applicants to successfully meet all the requirements and earn his **CSRP** credential.

"I was looking for an opportunity to educate myself about PV," Cook says. "The short-term value for me is that it provided exactly what I was looking for: an opportunity to educate myself. The program was laid out clearly; gave me the base of information I needed to do my job; allowed me to study the standards; gave me the guidance I needed; and is a great self-empowerment tool."

He adds: "My gut feeling is that this credential will help redefine the industry."

Growth of the credential

Growth of the [CSRP](#) credential is being propelled by the following three initiatives:

1. [RISE](#) is developing relationships with several building owner organizations and government agencies to build awareness of the specific benefits and value the [CSRP](#) credential offers. As these relationships progress, the demand for recommending or requiring a [CSRP](#) on-site during roof-mounted PV installations will increase.
2. [RISE](#) has arranged with [NRCA](#) to develop a series of online training modules in partnership with Penn State University, University Park, Pa. One of the most frequent questions received by [RISE](#) staff from prospective applicants about the credential is: "How and where do I get the training?" The board believes providing curriculum that supports the program is imperative to its growth and success.
3. [RISE](#) is pursuing a stringent and independent accreditation of the [CSRP](#) credential by the International Renewable Energy Council. Once achieved, this accreditation will provide numerous learning opportunities delivered by various educational and training organizations throughout the U.S. that directly support the [CSRP](#) credential and enable it to grow.

There has been a significant increase in requests from various stakeholders for information about the [CSRP](#) program, and the [RISE](#) board hopes this interest will translate into the credential becoming a key factor in the solar industry. Already, the credential has opened doors and engaged dialogue between [NRCA](#), the [center](#) and [RISE](#) staff and SEIA and other solar industry organizations.

Craig Isaacson, senior vice president of DERBIGUM Americas Inc., Kansas City, Mo., and a [RISE](#) board member, sees the [CSRP](#) as a unifying tool for the manufacturing community.

"This is not manufacturer against manufacturer; it is industry against industry, and we need to take off our competitive gloves to create a unified voice behind this certification," he says. "The [CSRP](#) certification is a great way to build credibility within our industry, and I encourage all manufacturers to endorse this program."

[RISE](#) board member Pat Nugent, director of policy and business development for Dow Solar Solutions, Midland, Mich., agrees.

"Dow Solar Solutions believes roofing contractors are necessary players in the installation of a solar system regarding a rooftop," she says. "We also believe training and education regarding the deployment of solar on rooftops is key to enable roofing contractors to take on this role."

The [RISE](#) board has asked major manufacturers of roof-mounted and roof-integrated PV products to require a [CSRP](#) be involved in varying capacities when their products are installed. To date, several have agreed to do so.

The first two **CSRP** exams took place in December 2010 and February 2011. To date, there are 29 **CSRPs** throughout the U.S. Future exams are scheduled for Sept. 30 and Feb. 24, 2012. The board predicts the number of **CSRPs** will triple annually as awareness and demand for **CSRPs** grows.

Pursuing the credential

To be eligible for the RISE **CSRP**, an applicant must be at least 18 years old, meet **RISE's** prerequisites of related experience and training or education, complete an application, sign a code of ethics and professional conduct, and pass a written exam. The applicant also must demonstrate he or she meets at least one of the following three eligibility tracks:

1. Three years' experience installing roof systems as a roofing contractor or employee of a roofing contractor in addition to completing 40 hours of recognized education or training. The applicant must be employed in a qualifying role or have been within the 12 months before submitting an application.
2. Three years' experience providing technical roof system consulting services that include a minimum of five installed roof system projects in addition to completing 40 hours of recognized training programs. The applicant must be employed in a qualifying role or have been within the 12 months before submitting an application.
3. A two- or four-year construction-related degree from a college or university accredited by an accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the U.S. secretary of education. In addition, the applicant must complete 40 hours of recognized education or training.

Those wishing to achieve certification should review the **CSRP** Job Task Analysis, exam specifications and sample questions to assess their readiness to take the exam. The application and candidate handbook can be downloaded from RISE's website, www.riseprofessional.org. If an applicant meets the program requirements, he or she will be eligible to take the **CSRP** exam.

Those who achieve the certification will receive a certificate and be entitled to use the RISE **CSRP** certification mark. **CSRP** certification is valid for three years; once certified, a person must meet the published standards, policies and requirements for ongoing recertification to renew his or her certified status.

Keeping pace

The roofing industry is now fully engaged with the solar industry. As we enter this new era, www.riseprofessional.org is dedicated to keeping pace with the fast-changing roof-mounted PV marketplace, and the **CSRP** credential will provide new levels of knowledge and professionalism that empower roofing professionals to meet the unprecedented renewable energy demands of building owners well into the future.

John Schehl is executive director of RISE.

The RISE board

The **RISE** board of directors includes members from all industry sectors.

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