

Firm plans solar farm in California desert

by UPI

PHOENIX - Buoyed by high oil prices, a small Phoenix company is testing a unique solar energy dish that generates enough electricity for a dozen homes. The prototype 40-foot dish developed by Stirling Energy Systems follows the sun continuously from east to west throughout the day producing clean energy, USA Today reported Monday. Stirling's technology is a type of solar thermal power that uses mirrors to concentrate the sun's heat to drive a generator that produces power. What is different about Stirling's dish is that each one will have its own engine. Stirling hopes to plant 70,000 of the dishes over the next seven years on two 7,000-acre solar farms on federal land in California's Mojave desert and in the Imperial Valley east of San Diego. If fully built, the two farms would almost double the amount of solar energy nationwide, powering some 1 million California homes. "They clearly have the technology. It's a matter of whether they can get the cost out," said Michael Niggli, of San Diego Gas & Electric, one of the customers Stirling hopes to supply.

Â© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Firm plans solar farm in California desert by UPI