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## AUSTIN BUSINESS JOURNAL

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# Solar + tunes = energy efficient concert series

Austin Business Journal - by [Sandra Zaragoza](#) Staff writer

*Editors Note: Music Industry Today is a series that will appear on this site every Thursday looking at the issues and artists shaping Austin's music scene.*

For the last few Wednesday evenings, popular acts like Del Castillo, Nelo and Ozomatli have rocked Republic Square Park while sharing the spotlight with an unlikely performer — solar power.

The Solar Powered Concert Series is a new, free music series created by Greg Henry, of Pro Show Live, and event production veteran Marsha Milam that places solar power on display.

This is the first solar powered concert series for Milam, who felt that Austin would be the ideal place to test such shows. Marsha Milam Music produces KGSR's "Unplugged at the Grove" and other concerts throughout Texas.

"Austin is such a green city itself, the residents are environmentally concerned," Milam said. "I do a number of music series and I thought Austin would be the place to embrace this."

To achieve the goal of clean power, the downtown park is outfitted with solar powered sound systems and lighting systems with LED lights.

Milam declined to disclose how much has been invested in the carbon-neutral concert series, saying only that costs are about 25 percent more than a typical concert series.

"Our goal for this was to prove that we can do it," Milam said, conceding that she didn't start marketing the series until the second show to make sure that the equipment functioned properly.

"What I've noticed is that the energy is so clean, and it makes a difference. There's no stage hum," she said. "That's great for the audience and for the artists."

Milam tapped Austin-based Sustainable Waves, a provider of solar powered sound, light and production equipment, for the concert series. Sustainable Waves also has a sales office in San Diego, Calif.

Cody Murray, of Sustainable Waves, said that the company's services were utilized at several events during this year's SXSW Music Festival. It's also brought its solar power equipment to Las Vegas-based N9NE Group's events, Vans Warped Tour and the New Belgium Brewery's Tour de Fat.

For the Solar Power Concert Series, Sustainable Wave's utilized 44,000 watt PA systems.

Sponsorship for this year's Solar Powered series was on the lighter side, but Milam said that she's hearing positive feedback from prospective sponsors who want to be associated with a green music event.

"This is our vision. You have to get out there and go through the labor pains and find out what works and what doesn't," she said. "Our goal is very clear; This isn't a one year thing for us."

The concert series is free, but donations are being accepted for Blue Dog Rescue, an Austin-area dog foster organization. There are two shows left, Fastball and The Black and White Years on June 10, and Arc Angels on June 24.

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