

Mall goes sustainable with solar roof

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Page: 20

TECHNOLOGY

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The Nicolway Bryanston neighbourhood shopping centre has a new tenant, but it's not one you can buy from. In fact, if you walk through the mall, you won't even see it. This is because the new tenant is on the roof.



Delivering on its commitment to become more sustainable, and use its space optimally, the popular centre in the northern suburb of Johannesburg now has a solar energy system on its roof.

Ask anyone that frequents this mall and you'll be told the same thing. This relatively small centre has a remarkable variety of tenants, from the large chain stores to the more unique offerings, in a compact arrangement that makes shopping easy. Including

stores such as Woolworths, Shoprite, Dis-Chem, Clicks, Food Lovers Market and Exclusive Books as well as retailers in arts, electronics, optometry, banking, health and beauty, décor, jewellery, travel and more. This classy centre is a convenient one-stop retail destination for residents of the area.

The country's electricity crisis has long been acknowledged for the many challenges it poses to businesses, including those in the retail sector. To this end, Nicolway installed generators to ensure that

shopping can continue uninterrupted during load-shedding a few years ago. "When considering new ways to improve our mall and use our space in the best way possible, we looked up, so to speak" says centre manager Gavin Balsdon. The solar plant was made possible by collaborating with New Southern Energy and the City of Johannesburg.

The 1.1 megawatt solar plant is made up of 2 720 Canadian solar panels, which are also connected to the national grid. East facing, due to the centre's layout, the system is able to produce 17% of the centre's energy needs simply by absorbing the sun's energy and converting it to electricity.

The solar plant was switched on at the beginning of 2020, after a quiet installation process that managed to avoid any possible disruption to shoppers. "We essentially worked under the radar" said New Southern Energy CEO David Masureik. "Materials were delivered at night so that trucks did not take up parking space. Deliveries were done daily to avoid the need for storage space. Above this, I must commend the centre for procuring the highest quality system available."

Nicolway's commitment to sustainability does not end there. The centre has implemented a recycling system for all used paper, plastic, cans and glass, which has been embraced by tenants. The centre also installed water savers on the taps in the restrooms. <<

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