

SolarBridge, AstroWatt get DOE grants

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[SolarBridge Technologies Inc.](#) and [AstroWatt Inc.](#) will receive, respectively, \$2.3 million and \$1.5 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Energy.

The grants were awarded as part of the DOE's "SunShot" initiative, which plans to reduce the cost of solar energy systems by about 75 percent before 2020, U.S. Rep. **Lloyd Doggett** announced today.

Austin-based SolarBridge, which was founded in 2004 as SmartSpark Energy Systems Inc., develops a microinverter designed to increase solar panel efficiency. It moved to Austin from Illinois in 2009. In June, it completed a \$19 million Series C round of funding, increasing to more than \$46 million the amount of financing the company received since launching.

Round Rock-based AstroWatt, founded in 2006, is developing low-cost, high-efficiency, thin silicon-based photovoltaic cells. In March, the company named former [Applied Materials](#) manager **Curt Vass** its CEO.

Last year, AstroWatt raised \$2.5 million from investors [Austin Ventures](#) and California-based [New Enterprise Associates](#) .