

Swiss build first solar-powered chairlift

By Michael Frank, Adventure Journal

Even though as the crow flies, the postage-stamp town of Tenna, Switzerland, isn't far from historic resorts like St. Moritz and Davos, Tenna is a one-horse town, one-shop, one-school, and one t-bar town. And that t-bar, the only ski lift in the whole valley, was on its last legs. But rather than let it die, locals raised enough money to update it and then went a step further: They built the world's first solar-powered ski lift.

It's more than solar-powered, in fact – it's a smart investment. The Tenna lift generates 90,000 kilowatts a year, or three times the juice needed to run the lift, and the extra power goes back into the grid, which makes money for the town, which can pay residents back.

So what happens to the 82 solar "wings" when it dumps? Not a problem, because they rotate to follow the path of the sun in the sky and can be tilted to perpendicular during a storm, so there's no load and the snow slides right off.

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