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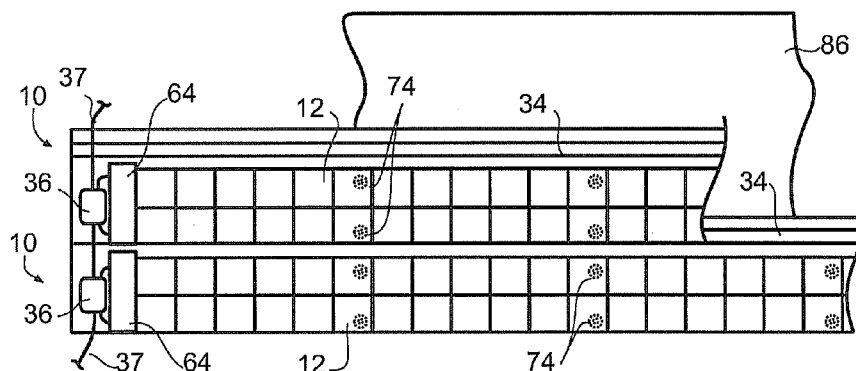
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— FIG. 14

(57) Abstract: The present application describes various embodiments of a solar roofing shingle assembly. One embodiment of the solar roofing shingle assembly includes an attachment panel configured for attachment to a roof deck and a solar shingle mounted to the attachment panel. Other advantages of the solar roofing shingle assembly will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description, when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

SOLAR ROOFING SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

[0001] Typical building applied photovoltaic (BAPV) and building integrated photovoltaic (BIPV) systems are labor intensive to install. An installer typically must attach brackets and frame rails to an existing roof deck over existing shingles and then mount the photovoltaic panels to the frame rails. In situations where the roof on a building is not relatively new; e.g. over ten years old, the BAPV system installer often must recommend that the roof be replaced concurrently with the installation of the BAPV system.

[0002] If the building roof is not replaced at the time the BAPV system is installed, a roof replacement later will require that the BAPV system be removed and reinstalled on the new roof, adding significant cost to the roof replacement. Some typical BIPV systems are nailed to the roof deck like a shingle, but are also installed in place of existing roof deck over existing shingles, and the building owner must also decide whether to replace the roof concurrently with installation of the BIPV system or risk having to remove and reinstall the BIPV system on a new roof.

[0003] The above notwithstanding, there remains a need in the art for an improved BIPV system.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present application describes various embodiments of a solar roofing shingle assembly. One embodiment of the solar roofing shingle assembly includes an attachment panel configured for attachment to a roof deck and a solar shingle mounted to the attachment panel.

[0005] Other advantages of the solar roofing shingle assembly will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description, when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] Fig. 1 is a plan view of a solar roofing shingle assembly according to the invention.

[0007] Fig. 2 is an exploded plan view of a solar roofing shingle illustrated in Fig. 1.

[0008] Fig. 3 is an elevational view of the solar roofing shingle illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2.

[0009] Fig. 4 is a plan view of a solar roofing shingle attachment panel illustrated in Fig. 1.

[0010] Fig. 5 is a front elevational view of the solar roofing shingle attachment panel illustrated in Figs. 1 and 4, showing the substrate in exaggerated thickness.

[0011] Fig. 5A is an enlarged front elevational view of a portion the solar roofing shingle attachment panel illustrated in Fig. 5, showing the attachment panel cover.

[0012] Fig. 6 is a front elevational view of a portion of a second embodiment of the attachment panel.

[0013] Fig. 7 is a front elevational view of a portion of a third embodiment of the attachment panel.

[0014] Fig. 8 is a front elevational view of a portion of a fourth embodiment of the attachment panel.

[0015] Fig. 9 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of the channel member illustrated in Fig. 4.

[0016] Fig. 10 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the channel member.

[0017] Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of the channel member.

[0018] Fig. 12 is a side elevational view of a fifth embodiment of the attachment panel, showing the bus bar channels formed as grooves.

[0019] Fig. 13 is a plan view of a portion of the solar roofing shingle attachment panel illustrated in Fig. 1, showing electrical connectors in the channel members.

[0020] Fig. 14 is a plan view of a portion of two overlapping solar roofing shingle assemblies installed on a roof deck.

[0021] Fig. 15 is a side elevational view of the solar roofing shingle illustrated in Figs. 2 and 3 being attached to the solar roofing shingle attachment panel illustrated in Fig. 4.

[0022] Fig. 16 is a side elevational view of a second solar roofing shingle being attached to first solar roofing shingle and the solar roofing shingle attachment panel illustrated in Fig. 15.

[0023] Fig. 17 is a side elevational view of a second embodiment of the solar roofing shingle assembly, showing a second embodiment of the solar roofing shingle being attached to a sixth embodiment of the solar roofing shingle attachment panel.

[0024] Fig. 18 is an exploded plan view of the solar roofing shingle illustrated in Fig. 17.

[0025] Fig. 19 is a side elevational view of a second embodiment of the electrical contacts.

[0026] Fig. 20 is a side elevational view of a third embodiment of the electrical contacts.

[0027] Fig. 21 is a side elevational view of a fourth embodiment of the electrical contacts.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] The present invention will now be described with occasional reference to the illustrated embodiments of the invention. This invention may, however, be embodied in different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein, nor in any order of preference. Rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be more thorough, and will convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art.

[0029] Unless otherwise defined, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. The terminology used in the description of the invention herein is for describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. As used in the description of the invention and the appended claims, the singular forms "a," "an," and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

[0030] Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers expressing quantities of ingredients, properties such as molecular weight, reaction conditions, and so forth as used in the specification and claims are to be understood as being modified in all instances by the term "about." Accordingly, unless otherwise indicated, the numerical properties set forth in the specification and claims are approximations that may vary depending on the desired properties sought to be obtained in embodiments of the present invention. Notwithstanding that the numerical ranges and parameters setting forth the broad scope of the invention are approximations, the numerical values set forth in the specific examples are reported as precisely as possible. Any numerical values, however, inherently contain certain errors necessarily resulting from error found in their respective measurements.

[0031] The building integrated photovoltaic (BIPV) roofing shingle assembly of the invention described below provides a relatively low cost, easy to install, and aesthetically pleasing BIPV roofing shingle, ideal for use on building structure roofs, such as on sloped roof applications with conventional asphalt shingles.

[0032] Referring now to Figs. 1 through 5, a first embodiment of a photovoltaic or solar roofing shingle assembly is shown generally at 10. In the illustrated embodiment, the solar roofing shingle assembly 10 includes a plurality of photovoltaic or solar roofing shingles 12 attached to a photovoltaic or solar

roofing shingle attachment panel 14, hereinafter referred to as the attachment panel 14. The attachment panel 14 has a leading edge 14A, a trailing edge 14B, first end 14C (left end when viewing Fig. 4), a second end 14D (right end when viewing Fig. 4), a first surface 14E (the upwardly facing surface when installed on a roof), and a second surface or back side 14F, opposite the first surface 14E.

[0033] The attachment panel 14 includes a substrate 16, shown with exaggerated thickness for clarity. In a first embodiment, the substrate 16 is formed from glass reinforced, polymer modified asphalt, such as is used to form a roofing shingle. In other embodiments, the substrate 16 may be formed from polymers, including but not limited to polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon. Alternatively, the substrate 16 may be formed from fiberglass-reinforced polymers, including but not limited to polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon.

[0034] The substrate 16 may have any desired size. In the illustrated embodiment, the substrate 16 has a length L1 of about 156.0 inches and a width W1 of about 18.0 inches. It will be understood that the length L1 and the width W1 of the substrate 16 define the length and width of the attachment panel 14. The illustrated attachment panel 14 is therefore configured to have four of the solar roofing shingles 12, described in detail below, attached. It will be further understood that the dimensions of solar roofing shingles may vary, and therefore the attachment panel 14 may have any other desired dimensions and be configured to have any desired number of solar roofing shingles attached. For example, the attachment panel 14 may have a length L1 within the range of from about 36.0

inches to about 360.0 inches. The attachment panel 14 may also have a length W1 within the range of from about 10.0 inches to about 24.0 inches.

[0035] In the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, the attachment panel 14 is shown as including a single layer of the substrate 16. Alternatively, the attachment panel 14 may include two layers of the substrate 16. As shown in Fig. 6, a second embodiment of the attachment panel is shown at 18 and includes a first substrate layer 20 defining the first surface 20E (the upwardly facing surface when installed on a roof). A second substrate layer 22 is substantially the same length as the first substrate layer 20 and is bonded to the backside 20F of the first substrate layer 20. Alternatively, the attachment panel 18 may include more than two layers of the substrate.

[0036] Referring to Fig. 7, a third embodiment of the attachment panel is shown at 24 and includes the first substrate layer 20 defining the first surface 20E. A second substrate layer 26 is bonded to the backside 20F of the first substrate layer 20. The second substrate layer 26 is longer than the first substrate layer 20, such that a first end 26C (left end when viewing Fig. 7), and a second end 26D (right end when viewing Fig. 7), of the second substrate layer 26 each extend outward of a first end 20C and a second end 20D of the first substrate layer 20, respectively, and define mounting members 28. In the illustrated embodiment, the first end 26C and the second end 26D may extend outward of the first end 20C and the second end 20D of the first substrate layer 20, respectively, by about 4.0 inches. Alternatively, the first end 26C and the second end 26D may extend outward of the first end 20C and the second end 20D of the first substrate layer 20 a distance within the range of about 1.0 inch to about 8.0 inches. The attachment panel 24 may also include more than two layers of the substrate.

[0037] Referring to Fig. 8, a fourth embodiment of the attachment panel is shown at 30 and includes the first substrate layer 20 defining the first surface 20E. First and second portions of the substrate are bonded to the backside 20F of the first substrate layer 20 and define mounting members 32. The mounting members 32 may extend outward of the first end 20C and the second end 20D of the first substrate layer 20, respectively, by about 4.0 inches. Alternatively, the mounting members 32 may extend outward of the first end 20C and the second end 20D of the first substrate layer 20 a distance within the range of about 1.0 inch to about 8.0 inches. Alternatively, the attachment panel 30 may include more than two more layers of the first substrate layer 20. It will be understood that the attachment panels illustrated in Figs. 6-8 are shown with components, such as the micro-inverter and bus bars, removed for clarity.

[0038] The attachment panel 14 may be attached to a roof in the same manner as a typical roofing shingle, and may include a reinforced nail zone 34 as disclosed in commonly assigned U.S. Patent No. 7,836,654, and commonly assigned U.S. Patent Application No. 13/155,600, both of which are incorporated herein by reference.

[0039] An inverter 36 is mounted to the first surface 14E at the first end 14C of the attachment panel 14. In the illustrated embodiment, the inverter is a solar micro-inverter 36. As used in the description of the invention and the appended claims, the term "micro-inverter" is defined as a device that converts direct current (DC) from a single solar panel or solar panel array to alternating current (AC).

[0040] As shown in Fig. 4, electrical connectors 37, such as insulated wires, connect the micro-inverter 36 to the positive and negative DC bus bars 38 and 40, described below, adjacent micro-inverters 36, and the electrical panel (not shown)

of the building to which the attachment panel or panels 14 are mounted. The micro-inverter 36 may be any micro-inverter, such as a 200 Watt micro-inverter. Alternately, a micro-inverter having a rating within the range of from about 100 W to about 500 W may also be used.

[0041] Bus bar channels 42 may be attached to, or formed in, the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14. The bus bar channels may be configured as channel members mounted to the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14, and configured to receive and provide a mounting surface for the DC bus bars 38 and 40. A first embodiment of the channel members are shown at 44 in Figs. 4, 5, and 9. The channel member 44 includes a body defining a channel. In the illustrated embodiment, the channel member 44 is an elongated member having a substantially U-shaped cross section. Alternatively, the channel member 44 may be formed having a channel with any desired cross sectional shape.

[0042] The channel members 44 may be attached to the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 by any desired means, such as with an adhesive or mechanical fasteners 46. Examples of suitable adhesives include but are not limited to the polymer modified asphalt of the substrate 16, polymer adhesives such as acrylic, silicone, and polyurethane adhesives, and elastomeric sealants such as acrylic, silicone, and polyurethane elastomeric materials. These adhesives may be cured under ambient conditions or with the assistance of thermal and/or electromagnetic radiation. Examples of suitable mechanical fasteners include but are not limited to rivets, screws, and entanglement materials, such as various hook and loop fastening materials.

[0043] A second embodiment of the channel member is shown at 48 in Fig. 10. The channel member 48 has an elongated body 50, having a substantially U-shaped cross section similar to the channel member 44, but includes longitudinally

extending flanges 52. The channel members 48 may be attached to the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 by any desired means, such as with an adhesive or mechanical fasteners 46 which extend through the body 50 and/or the flanges 52.

[0044] A third embodiment of the channel member is shown at 54 in Fig. 11. The channel member 54 has an elongated body 56, having a substantially U-shaped cross section similar to the channel member 44, but includes longitudinally extending stepped portions defining inwardly extending shoulders 58. The channel member 54 may be attached to the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 by any desired means as described above.

[0045] The channel members 44, 48, and 54 may be formed from metal such as iron, steel, aluminum, copper, titanium, and other metals and metal alloys including those that include precious and/or corrosion resistant metals. Alternatively, the channel members 44, 48, and 54 may be formed from polymers such as polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon, and from fiberglass-reinforced polymers, such as polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon. The channel members 44, 48, and 54 may have any desired depth D1, such as a depth of about 0.25 inches. Alternatively, the channel members 44, 48, and 54 may have a depth D1 within the range of from about 0.05 inches to about 0.75 inches. The channel members 44, 48, and 54 may also have any other desired depth.

[0046] A fifth embodiment of the bus bar channels are shown in Fig. 12. In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 12, the bus bar channels 42 are configured as elongated depressions or grooves 60 formed in the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14. Like the channel members 44, 48, and 54, the grooves 60 are

configured to receive and provide a mounting surface for the DC bus bars 38 and 40. The grooves 60 may have any desired depth D1, such as a depth of about 0.125 inches. Alternatively, the groove 60 may have a depth D1 within the range of from about 0.05 inches to about 0.70 inches. The groove 60 may also have any other desired depth.

[0047] In the embodiment of the attachment panel 14 illustrated in Fig. 4, DC bus bars 38 and 40 are mounted within the bus bar channels 42. As shown, the bus bar 38 is a positive bus bar and the bus bar 40 is a negative bus bar. The bus bars 38 and 40 may be formed from any desired metal, such as copper, aluminum, and other metals and metal alloys including but not limited to those that include precious metals. Alternatively, the bus bars 38 and 40 may be configured as insulated wire, or a printed circuit. Additionally, electrical connectors 62, as shown schematically in Fig. 13, may be attached to the bus bars 38 and 40 for connecting to corresponding electrical contacts 74 of the solar roofing shingle 12. As described in detail below, the electrical contacts 74 of the solar roofing shingle 12 contact the positive and negative DC bus bars 38 and 40. The bus bars 38 and 40 may be attached to the bus bar channels 42 by any desired means, such as with an adhesive, the fasteners 46, or by mechanical or thermal bonding. The bus bars 38 and 40 are further connected to the micro-inverter 36 by a pair of electrical connectors 39.

[0048] An attachment member 64 is spaced apart from the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 and connected to the first surface 14E by pair of support posts 66. In the illustrated embodiment, the support posts 66 are substantially cylindrical. Alternatively, the support posts 66 may have any other desired shape. In the illustrated embodiment, the attachment member 64 is substantially flat and spaced apart from the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 a distance

slightly larger than the thickness of the mounting flange 70 of the solar roofing shingle 12.

[0049] An attachment panel cover may be provided to cover the micro-inverter 36. In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 5A, an attachment panel cover is shown at 80. The attachment panel cover 80 is molded or otherwise formed to fit closely to the micro-inverter 36 and the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14. The attachment panel cover 80 includes a first flange 82 and a second flange 84. The attachment panel cover 80 may be mounted to the attachment panel 14 by inserting the first flange 82 into the space between the attachment member 64 and the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14. If desired, the attachment panel cover 80 may include notches, such as the notches 72 that correspond to the support posts 66. The second flange 84 may extend outward (to the left when viewing Fig. 5A) and be attached to the roof deck 86 with any desired fastener, such as nails or staples. The second flange 84 may then be covered by a shingle in an adjacent course of shingles. The attachment panel cover 80 may be formed from metals, including but not limited to painted or otherwise-coated metals, such as steel, aluminum, and other metals and metal alloys. Alternatively, the attachment panel cover 80 may be formed from polymers, including but not limited to polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon, and from fiberglass-reinforced polymers, including but not limited to polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon.

[0050] In the illustrated embodiments, the micro-inverter 36 is shown mounted to the first surface 14E at the first end 14C of the attachment panel 14.

Alternatively, the micro-inverter 36 may be mounted to the first surface 14E at the second end 14D of the attachment panel 14.

[0051] Referring now to Figs. 2 and 3, the illustrated solar roofing shingle 12 includes a shingle substrate 68. In a first embodiment, the shingle substrate 68 is formed from glass reinforced, polymer modified asphalt, such as is used to form a roofing shingle. In other embodiments, the shingle substrate 68 may be formed from polymers, including but not limited to polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polycarbonate, acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS), polystyrene, and nylon.

[0052] The shingle substrate 68 may have any desired size. In the illustrated embodiment, the shingle substrate 68 has a length L2 of about 36.0 inches and a width W2 of about 12.0 inches. Alternately, shingle substrate 68 may have a length L2 within the range of from about 36.0 inches to about 42.0 inches. The shingle substrate 68 may also have a width W2 within the range of from about 12.0 inches to about 20.0 inches. As illustrated, the solar roofing shingle 12 has a size consistent with the size of a conventional roofing shingle.

[0053] In the illustrated embodiment, a mounting flange 70 is bonded to a backside 68F of the shingle substrate 68. The mounting flange 70 extends outward of the first end 68C of the shingle substrate 68 by about 4.0 inches. Alternatively, the mounting flange 70 may extend outward of the first end 68C of the shingle substrate 68 a distance within the range of about 2.0 inches to about 6.0 inches. The solar roofing shingle 12 may also include more than two layers of the shingle substrate 68. The mounting flange 70 may be formed from any of the materials described above for forming the shingle substrate 68 or from metals, including but not limited to steel, aluminum, and other metals and metal alloys. In the illustrated

embodiment, the mounting flange 70 includes a pair of notches 72 formed in a first end 70C (left end when viewing Fig. 2) of the mounting flange 70.

[0054] Attachment members 74 extend through the shingle substrate 68 and outward of the backside 68F at the second end 68D of the shingle substrate 68. The attachment members 74 define electrical contacts 74.

[0055] In the embodiment of the solar roofing shingle 12 illustrated in Fig. 2, an array 76 of photovoltaic or solar cells 78 are mounted to a first surface 68E (the upwardly facing surface when installed on a roof) of the shingle substrate 68.

[0056] The solar cells 78 may be any desired solar cell, including solar cells formed from but not limited to single crystal silicon, polycrystalline silicon, amorphous silicon, thin film cadmium telluride (CdTe), thin film copper-indium-gallium-selenide (CIGS), dye-sensitized titania, and other photovoltaic material.

[0057] In the illustrated embodiment, an array of 12 photovoltaic or solar cells 78 (arranged six along the length L2 and two along the width W2 of the solar roofing shingle 12) are mounted to the first surface 68E of the shingle substrate 68. The solar cells 78 may be mounted or attached to the first surface 68E of the shingle substrate 68 by any desired means, such as with an adhesive or by thermal bonding. Each of the solar cells 78 are electrically connected to an adjacent solar cell 78, and the array 76 is electrically connected to the electrical contacts 74. If desired, additional electrical components and/or connectors may be mounted to the backside 68F of the shingle substrate 68. Examples of the additional electrical components include, but are not limited to, power electronics for monitoring solar cell performance, and any electrical connectors for connecting the solar cells 78 to each other and to the micro-inverter 36.

[0058] The electrical contacts 74 may be any desired type of electrically conductive member that contacts the bus bars 38 and 40. Referring now to Fig. 19,

a second embodiment of the electrical contact is illustrated at 200. The electrical contact 200 includes a body 202 having a longitudinal axis A. A contact member 204 extends longitudinally outwardly (downwardly when viewing Fig. 19) of the body 202. An electrical connector (not shown) connects the contact member 204 to the solar cells 78 of the array 76. In the illustrated embodiment, a longitudinally extending channel 206 is formed in the body 202 and defines a conduit for the electrical connector that connects the contact member 204 to the array 76. As shown in Fig. 19, the contact member 204 may include a sharpened end configured to pierce the insulation of insulated wire that may be used to define the bus bars 38 and 40.

[0059] Retention members or lugs 208 extend transversely outwardly of the body 202 and are coaxially mounted relative to each other. In the illustrated embodiment, the lugs 208 have a tapered end surface 209 to facilitate mounting the lugs 208 within the channel member 54. A biasing member urges the retention lugs 208 outward of each other and outward of the body 202. In the illustrated embodiment, the biasing member is a spring 210.

[0060] The spring biased lugs 208 retain the electrical contacts 200 within the channel members 54, and further retain the solar roofing shingle 12 to the attachment panel 14.

[0061] In the illustrated embodiment, the electrical contact 200 is configured to be rotated about the axis A relative the shingle substrate 68 so that the lugs 208 can be longitudinally aligned with the channel member 54 and removed from the attachment panel 14. A portion 212 of the outer surface of the body 202 may include flattened portions or facets 212F to provide engagement surfaces for a wrench or other tool to be used to rotate the electrical contact 200.

[0062] Referring now to Fig. 20, and using like reference numbers to indicate corresponding parts, a third embodiment of the electrical contact is shown generally at 220. The electrical contact 220 is similar to the electrical contact 200, but includes retention members or lugs 222 extending transversely outwardly of the body 202. In the illustrated embodiment, the lugs 222 have a rounded end surface 224 to facilitate mounting the lugs 222 within the channel member 54. The spring 210 urges the retention lugs 222 outward of each other and outward of the body 202. The spring biased lugs 222 retain the electrical contacts 220 within the channel members 54, and further retain the solar roofing shingle 12 to the attachment panel 14.

[0063] The attachment panels 14 and solar roofing shingles 12 of the solar roofing shingle assembly 10 described above are advantageously easy for a roof installer to transport and install on a roof. Significantly, the solar roofing shingle assembly 10 may be installed on an existing roof or as part of a new shingle roof. In a first step of the installation process, the attachment panels 14 may be carried to a roof.

[0064] For each attachment panel 14 to be installed on an existing roof, a portion of one course of existing roofing shingles must be removed for a distance equal to the length of the attachment panel 14 plus at least one shingle adjacent each of the first second ends 14C and 14D of the attachment panel 14. Also, one horizontal course of existing roofing shingles must be removed above and below the attachment panel 14 or group of attachment panels 14. Any existing underlayment may then be removed to expose the roof deck 86, and any damage to the roof deck 86 may then be repaired. If desired, a new underlayment may be applied to the roof deck 86 in area to be covered by the solar roofing shingle assembly 10. In one embodiment, a waterproof underlayment is applied to the roof

deck 86. Examples of suitable waterproof underlayments include ice and water barriers such WEATHERLOCK® self-sealing ice & water barrier products manufactured by Owens Corning. Alternatively, other ice & water barrier products may be used.

[0065] The installer may then attach a first attachment panel 14 to the roof deck 86 by driving nails through the reinforced nail zone 34. A second attachment panel 14 may then be attached to the roof deck 86 to define second course above the first attachment panel 14, as shown in Fig. 14. Additional attachment panels 14 may be attached to the roof deck 86 above the second and subsequently attached attachment panels 14 in the same manner.

[0066] Adjacent attachment panels 14 may be electrically connected together by the electrical connectors 37. Because adjacent attachment panels 14 are electrically connected to each other in a daisy chain, only one electrical connector 37 of one attachment panel 14 in the chain, typically the lower most attachment panel 14, must be connected to the electrical panel (not shown) of the building to which the attachment panels 14 are mounted. This creates the benefit of only requiring one access opening or hole in the roof deck 86 for one electrical connector 37.

[0067] Once the attachment panels 14 are mounted to the roof deck 86, the solar roofing shingles 12 may be mounted or attached to the attachment panel 14. A first solar roofing shingle 12 may be mounted to the attachment panel 14 by inserting the mounting flange 70 into the space between the attachment member 64 and the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 until the notches 72 engage the support posts 66, as shown in Fig. 15. A second end 12D of the solar roofing shingles 12 may then be urged downwardly until the electrical contacts 74 contact the bus bars 38 and 40. In the illustrated embodiment, the spring loaded members

of the electrical contacts 74 also retain the solar roofing shingle 12 to the attachment panel 14. When the electrical contacts 74 are seated in the bus bar channels 42, as shown in Fig. 16, the second end 12D of the solar roofing shingle 12 is spaced apart from the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14. In the illustrated embodiment, the second end 12D of the solar roofing shingle 12 is spaced apart from the first surface 14E of the attachment panel a distance slightly larger than the thickness of the mounting flange 70 of the solar roofing shingle 12.

[0068] Second and subsequent solar roofing shingles 12 may be mounted to the attachment panel 14 in a similar manner by inserting the mounting flange 70 into the space between the second end 12D of a previously mounted adjacent solar roofing shingle 12 and the first surface 14E of the attachment panel 14 until the notches 72 engage the electrical contacts 74. A second end 12D of the second and subsequently mounted solar roofing shingles 12 may then be urged downwardly until the electrical contacts 74 contact the bus bars 38 and 40 and the solar roofing shingle 12 is retained in place relative to the attachment panel 14.

[0069] When the solar roofing shingle assembly 10 is installed on a new roof, the attachment panel 14 and the roofing shingles 12 may be mounted to the roof deck 86 in the manner described above. The cover panels 80 are then installed to complete the installation of the shingle assemblies 10. Roofing shingles may subsequently be mounted to the roof deck 86 in a known manner. Attachment panels 14 may be attached to a new roof according to the process described above.

[0070] Advantageously, when a building or structure having the inventive solar roofing shingle assembly 10 installed must be re-roofed, the solar roofing shingle assembly 10 may remain in place, thereby reducing the cost of the re-roofing project.

[0071] Referring now to Figs. 17 and 18, and using like reference numbers to indicate corresponding parts, a second embodiment of a photovoltaic or solar roofing shingle assembly is shown generally at 110. In the illustrated embodiment, the solar roofing shingle assembly 110 includes a plurality of a second embodiment of the solar roofing shingles 112 attached to a sixth embodiment of the solar roofing shingle attachment panel 114.

[0072] The illustrated attachment panel 114 is similar to the roofing shingle attachment panel 14, but does not include bus bars. Rather, the posts 166 define positive and negative electrical connectors 166 and are further connected to the micro-inverter 36 by the electrical connectors 39, as shown in Figs. 1 and 4. Additionally, the channels 54, as described above, are configured as mounting channels 54.

[0073] The attachment panel 114 also has a leading edge 114A, a trailing edge (not shown), first end 114C (left end when viewing Fig. 17), a second end (not shown), a first surface 114E (the upwardly facing surface when installed on a roof), and a second surface or back side 114F, opposite the first surface 114E.

[0074] Referring now to Fig. 18, the illustrated solar roofing shingles 112 is similar to the solar roofing shingles 12, and includes a mounting flange 170 bonded to a backside 68F of the shingle substrate 68. The mounting flange 170 includes a pair of notches 172 formed in a first end 170C (left end when viewing Fig. 18) of the mounting flange 170.

[0075] As described above, each of the solar cells 78 are electrically connected to an adjacent solar cell 78, and the array 76 is electrically connected to the electrical contacts 174. The notches 172 define positive and negative electrical connectors and are further connected to the array 76 of solar cells 78 by electrical connectors 171.

[0076] Attachment members 174 extend outward of the backside 68F at the second end 68D of the shingle substrate 68. The attachment members 174 define positive and negative electrical contacts 174, and are also connected to the array 76 of solar cells 78.

[0077] Referring now to Fig. 21, and using like reference numbers to indicate corresponding parts, a fourth embodiment of the electrical contact is shown generally at 174. The electrical contact 174 is similar to the electrical contact 200, but includes an electrically conductive body 176. The electrically conductive body 176 is electrically connected to the solar cells 78 of the array 76. In the illustrated embodiments, the lugs 208 are shown. Alternatively, the lugs 222 may also be used with the electrical contact 174. As described above, spring biased lugs 208 retain the electrical contacts 174 within the channel members 54, and further retain the solar roofing shingle 12 to the attachment panel 14.

[0078] One or more attachment panels 114 may be attached to the roof deck 86 in the manner described above. Once the attachment panels 114 are mounted to the roof deck 86, the solar roofing shingles 112 may be mounted or attached to the attachment panel 114. A first solar roofing shingle 112 may be mounted to the attachment panel 114 by inserting the mounting flange 170 into the space between the attachment member 64 and the first surface 114E of the attachment panel 114 until the notches 172 engage the electrical connectors 166, as shown in Fig. 17. A second end 112D of the solar roofing shingles 112 may then be urged downwardly until the electrical contacts 174 contact the mounting channels 54.

[0079] In the illustrated embodiment, the electrical contacts 174 also retain the solar roofing shingle 112 to the attachment panel 114. When the electrical contacts 174 are seated in the mounting channels 54, the second end 112D of the solar roofing shingle 112 is spaced apart from the first surface 114E of the attachment

panel 114. The second end 112D of the solar roofing shingle 112 may be spaced apart from the first surface 114E of the attachment panel a distance slightly larger than the thickness of the mounting flange 170 of the solar roofing shingle 112.

[0080] Second and subsequent solar roofing shingles 112 may be mounted to the attachment panel 114 in a similar manner by inserting the mounting flange 170 into the space between the second end 112D of a previously mounted adjacent solar roofing shingle 112 and the first surface 114E of the attachment panel 114 until the notches 172 engage the electrical contacts 174. A second end 112D of the second and subsequently mounted solar roofing shingles 112 may then be urged downwardly until the electrical contacts 174 contact the mounting channels 54 and the solar roofing shingle 112 is retained in place relative to the attachment panel 114.

[0081] The present invention should not be considered limited to the specific examples described herein, but rather should be understood to cover all aspects of the invention. Various modifications, equivalent processes, as well as numerous structures and devices to which the present invention may be applicable will be readily apparent to those of skill in the art. Those skilled in the art will understand that various changes may be made without departing from the scope of the invention, which is not to be considered limited to what is described in the specification.

1. A solar roofing shingle assembly comprising:
an attachment panel configured for attachment to a roof deck;
at least one solar shingle mounted to the attachment panel; and
an inverter supported by the attachment panel and electrically connected to the at least one solar shingle;
wherein the attachment panel includes a substrate having a first surface upon which the at least one solar shingle is mounted;
wherein each of the at least one solar shingle includes a shingle substrate having a first surface upon which a plurality of solar cells are mounted, and a backside engaging the first surface;
wherein each of the at least one solar shingle further includes an electrical contact extending outward of the backside of the shingle substrate, the electrical contact being received in a channel in the first surface of the attachment panel.
2. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one solar shingle comprises a plurality of solar shingles.
3. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the inverter is mounted to the first surface of the attachment panel.
4. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the substrate further includes a bus bar mounted to the first surface and electrically connecting the at least one solar shingle and the inverter.
5. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the electrical contact is electrically connected to the bus bar.
6. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the attachment panel includes a substrate formed from one of polymer modified asphalt, glass reinforced polymer modified asphalt, and a polymer.

7. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 6, wherein the attachment panel includes at least two layers of the substrate.
8. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the attachment panel includes a substrate having a length within the range of from about 36.0 inches to about 360.0 inches and a width within the range of from about 10.0 inches to about 24.0 inches.
9. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the attachment panel includes a first substrate layer and a second substrate layer bonded to a backside of the first substrate layer;
wherein the second substrate layer is longer than the first substrate layer, such that one of a first and a second end of the second substrate layer extends outward of a respective first and second end of the first substrate layer; and
wherein the one of the first and a second end of the second substrate layer defines a mounting member.
10. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the inverter is a solar micro-inverter.
11. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 10, wherein the solar micro-inverter has a power output rating within the range of from about 100 W to about 500 W.
12. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the first surface of the substrate further includes a bus bar channel; and wherein the bus bar is mounted within the bus bar channel.
13. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 12, wherein the bus bar channel is an elongated member having a body defining a channel, the elongated member mounted to the first surface; and wherein the bus bar is mounted within the elongated member.

14. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 12, wherein the bus bar channel is defined by a groove formed in the first surface; and wherein the bus bar is mounted within the groove.
15. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the attachment panel includes an attachment member mounted to and spaced apart from the first surface; and wherein a portion of the at least one solar shingle is disposed between the attachment member and the first surface.
16. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one solar shingle includes a shingle substrate formed from one of polymer modified asphalt, glass reinforced polymer modified asphalt, and a polymer.
17. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one solar shingle includes a shingle substrate having a length within the range of from about 36.0 inches to about 42.0 inches and a width within the range of from about 12.0 inches to about 20.0 inches.
18. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one solar shingle includes a shingle substrate having a first surface upon which at least one solar cell is mounted, the solar shingle further including a mounting flange extending outward of a first end of the shingle substrate.
19. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one solar cell is formed from one of single crystal silicon, polycrystalline silicon, amorphous silicon, thin film cadmium telluride (CdTe), thin film copper-indium-gallium-selenide (CIGS), and dye-sensitized titania.
20. The solar roofing shingle assembly of claim 1, wherein the attachment panel includes a nail zone along a trailing edge of the attachment panel, the at least one solar shingle being mounted to a leading edge of the attachment panel.
21. A solar roofing system comprising:
a first solar roofing shingle assembly comprising:

a first attachment panel attached to a roof deck, the first attachment panel including a first substrate having an upper surface;

a first solar shingle mounted to the upper surface of the first attachment panel, the first solar shingle including a first shingle substrate having an upper surface upon which a plurality of solar cells are mounted, and a backside engaging the upper surface of the first attachment panel; and

a first inverter supported by the first attachment panel and electrically connected to the first solar shingle; and

a second solar roofing shingle assembly comprising:

a second attachment panel attached to the roof deck such that a leading edge of the second attachment panel overlaps a trailing edge of the first attachment panel, the second attachment panel including a second substrate having an upper surface;

a second solar shingle mounted to the upper surface of the second attachment panel, the second solar shingle including a second shingle substrate having an upper surface upon which a plurality of solar cells are mounted, and a backside engaging the upper surface of the second attachment panel; and

a second inverter supported by the second attachment panel and electrically connected to the second solar shingle, the second inverter further being electrically connected to the first inverter.

22. The solar roofing system of claim 21, wherein each of the first and second solar shingles further includes an electrical contact extending outward of the backside of the corresponding shingle substrate, the electrical contact being received in a channel in the upper surface of the corresponding attachment panel.

23. A solar roofing shingle assembly comprising:

an attachment panel configured for attachment to a roof deck;

a plurality of solar shingles mounted to the attachment panel; and

an inverter electrically connected to the solar shingles;

wherein the attachment panel includes a substrate having a first surface upon which the solar shingles and the inverter are mounted;

wherein each solar shingle includes a shingle substrate having a first surface upon which a plurality of solar cells are mounted, and a backside opposite the first surface;

wherein the substrate further includes a bus bar mounted to the first surface and electrically connecting the solar shingles and the inverter; and

wherein each solar shingle further includes an electrical contact extending outward of the backside of the shingle substrate, the electrical contact electrically connected to the bus bar.

24. In combination, a roof and a solar roofing shingle assembly having an attachment panel attached to the roof, and a solar shingle mounted to the attachment panel;

the attachment panel including a substrate formed from one of polymer modified asphalt, glass reinforced polymer modified asphalt, and a polymer, the substrate having a first surface upon which the solar shingle is mounted, the attachment panel further including an inverter mounted to the first surface and electrically connected to the solar shingle and an attachment member mounted to and spaced apart from the first surface, the substrate further including a bus bar mounted to the first surface and electrically connecting the solar shingle and the inverter, a portion of the solar shingle being disposed between the attachment member and the first surface; and

the solar shingle including a shingle substrate having a first surface upon which a solar cell is mounted and a backside opposite the first surface, the solar shingle further including a mounting flange extending outward of a first end of the shingle substrate, the solar cell being formed from one of single crystal silicon, polycrystalline silicon, amorphous silicon, thin film cadmium telluride (CdTe), thin film copper-indium-gallium-selenide (CIGS), and dye-sensitized titania, the solar shingle further including an electrical contact extending outward of the backside of the shingle substrate, the electrical contact electrically connecting the bus bar and the inverter.

25. A solar roofing shingle assembly comprising:

an attachment panel configured for attachment to a roof deck;

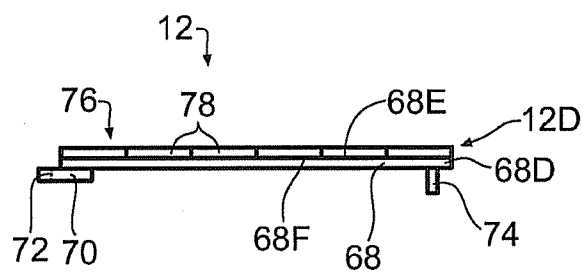
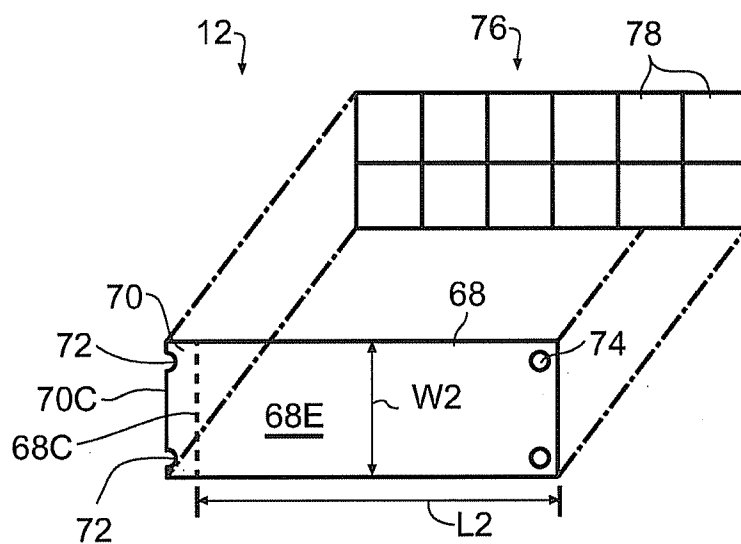
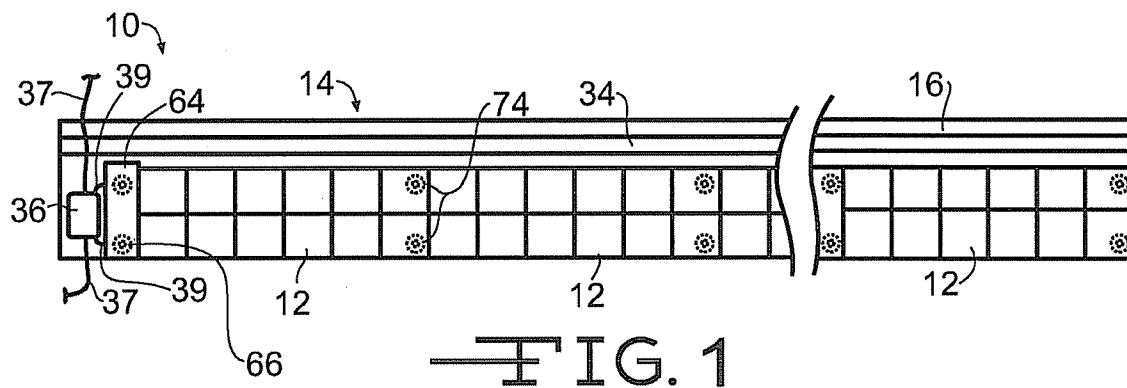
a plurality of solar shingles mounted to the attachment panel; and

an inverter electrically connected to the solar shingles;

wherein the attachment panel includes a substrate having a first surface upon which the solar shingles and the inverter are mounted;

wherein each solar shingle includes a shingle substrate having a first surface upon which a plurality of solar cells are mounted, and a backside opposite the first surface; and

wherein each solar shingle includes a first end and a second end, the first end electrically connected to one of the attachment panel and the second end of an adjacent solar shingle, and the second end configured for electrical connection to the first end of an adjacent solar shingle.



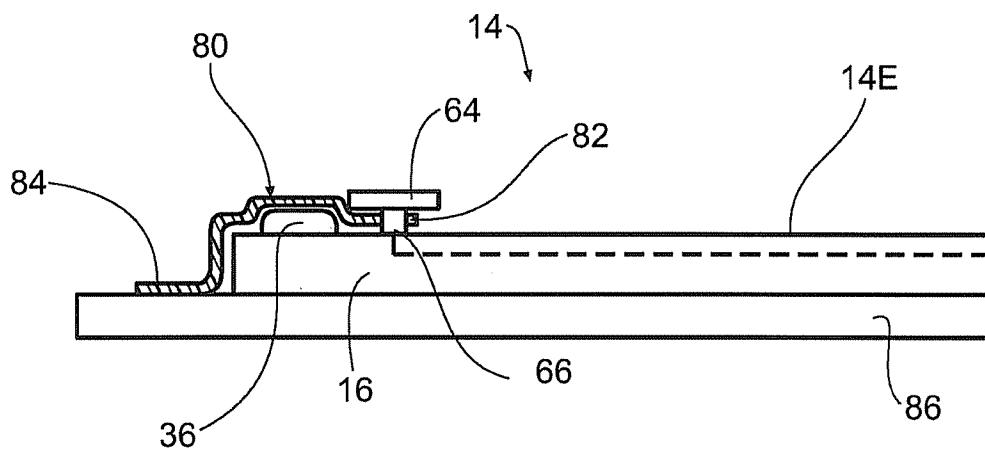
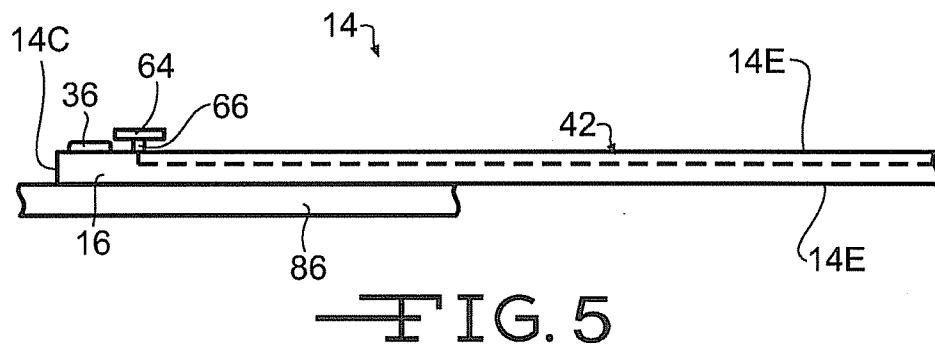
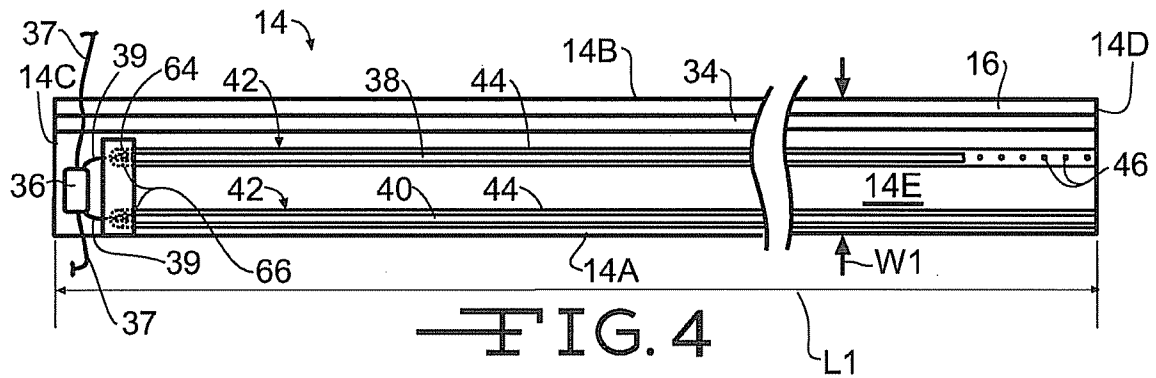


FIG. 5A

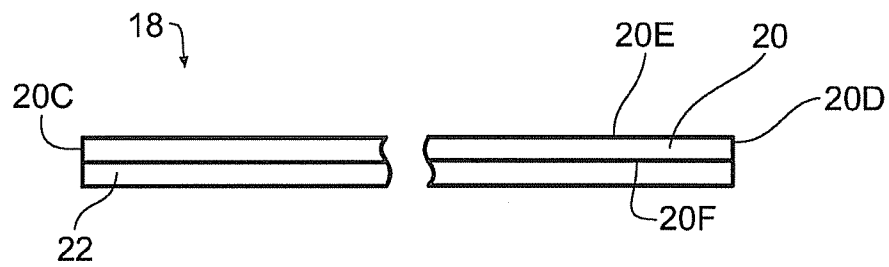


FIG. 6

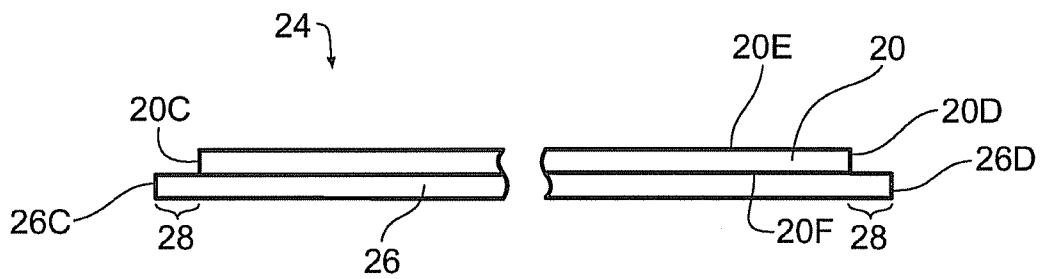


FIG. 7

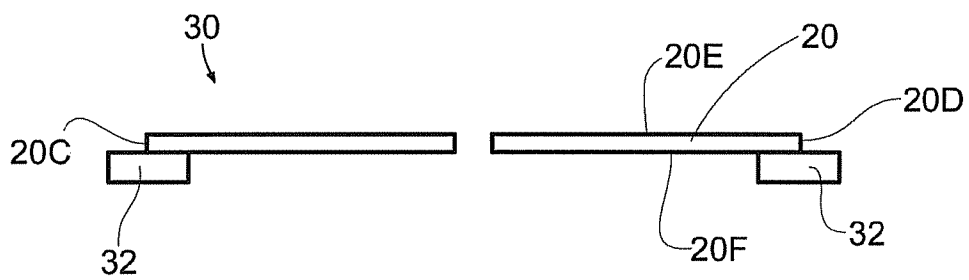


FIG. 8

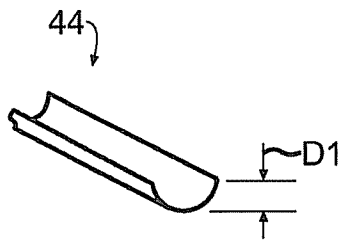


FIG. 9

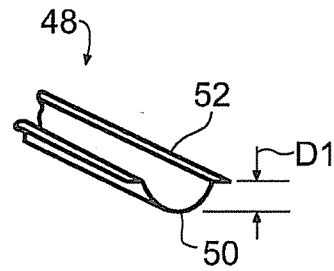


FIG. 10

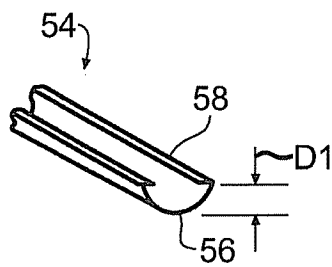


FIG. 11

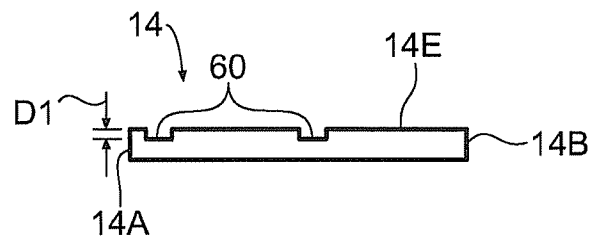


FIG. 12

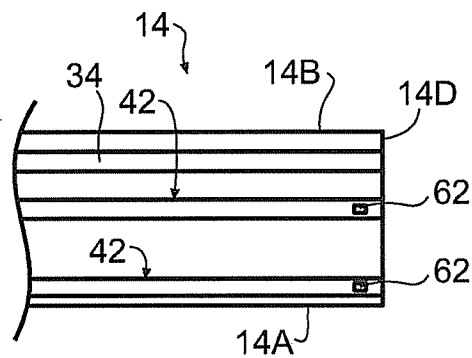


FIG. 13

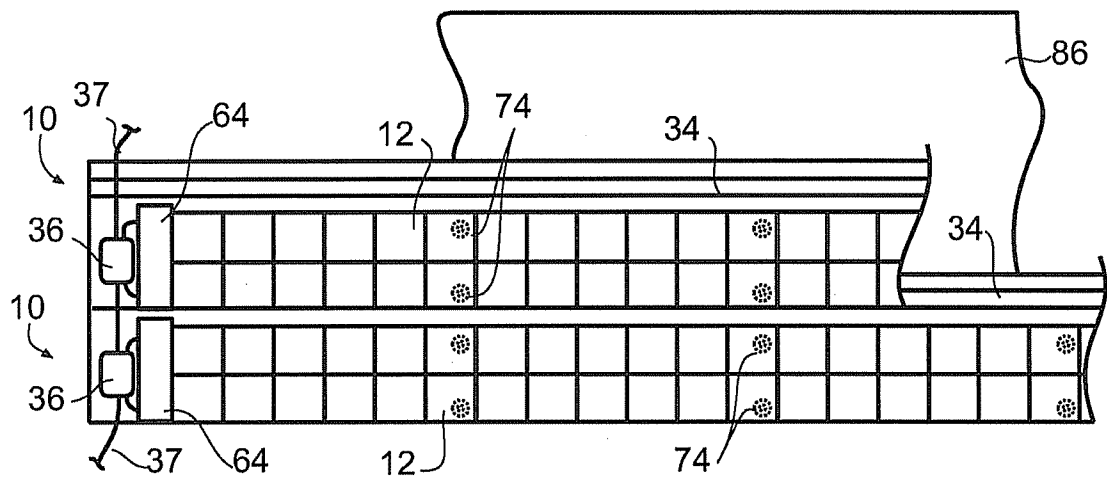


FIG. 14

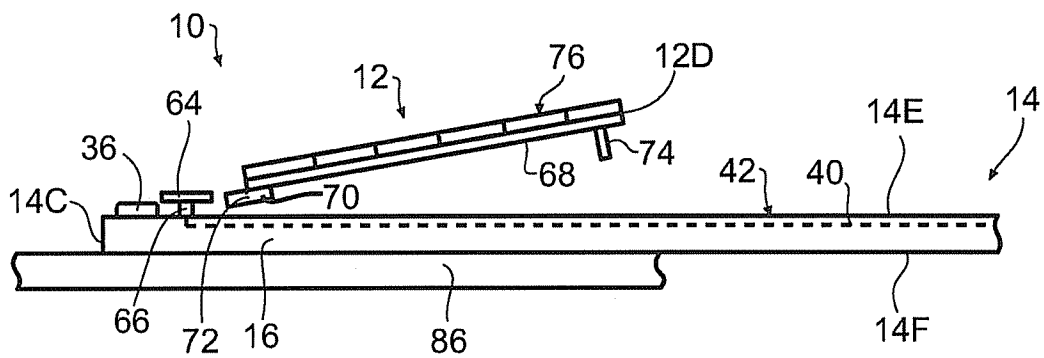


FIG. 15

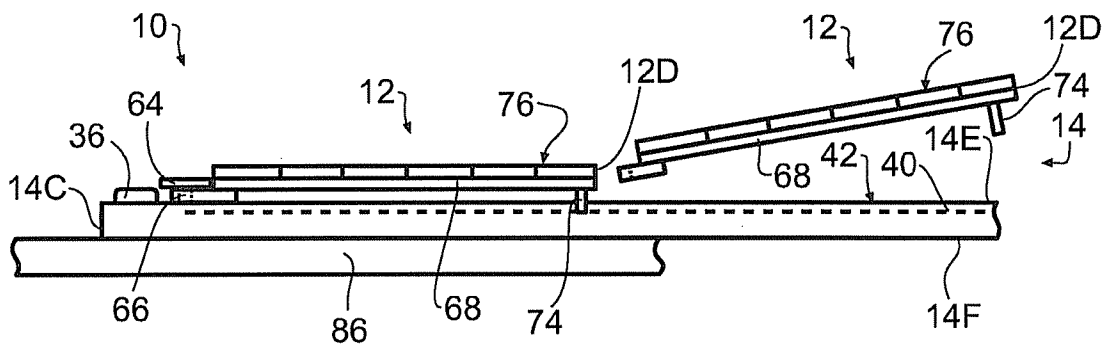


FIG. 16

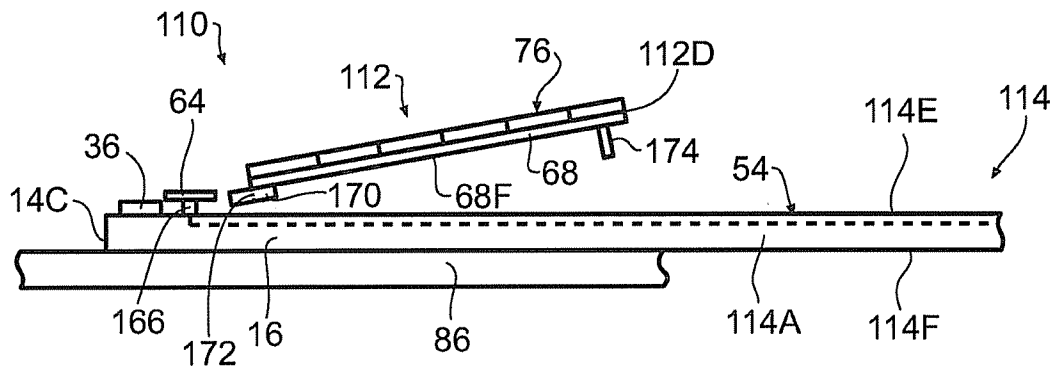


FIG. 17

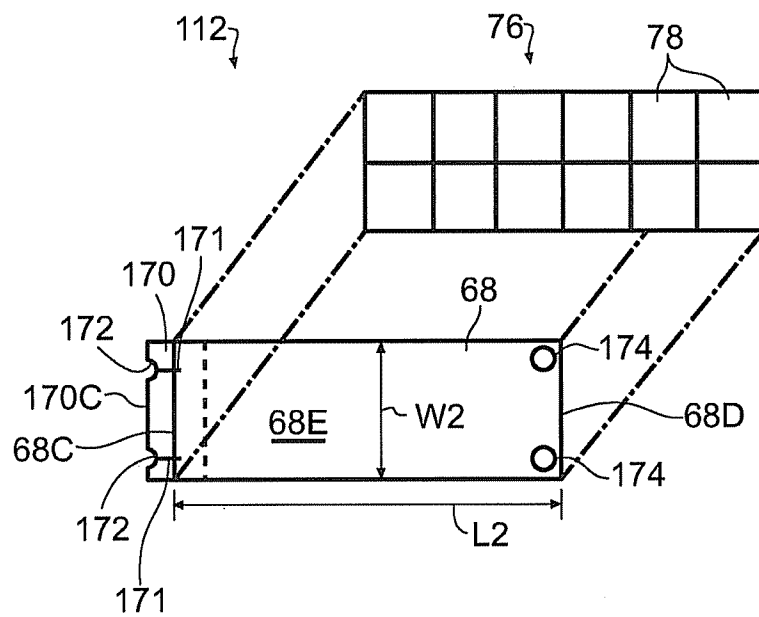


FIG. 18

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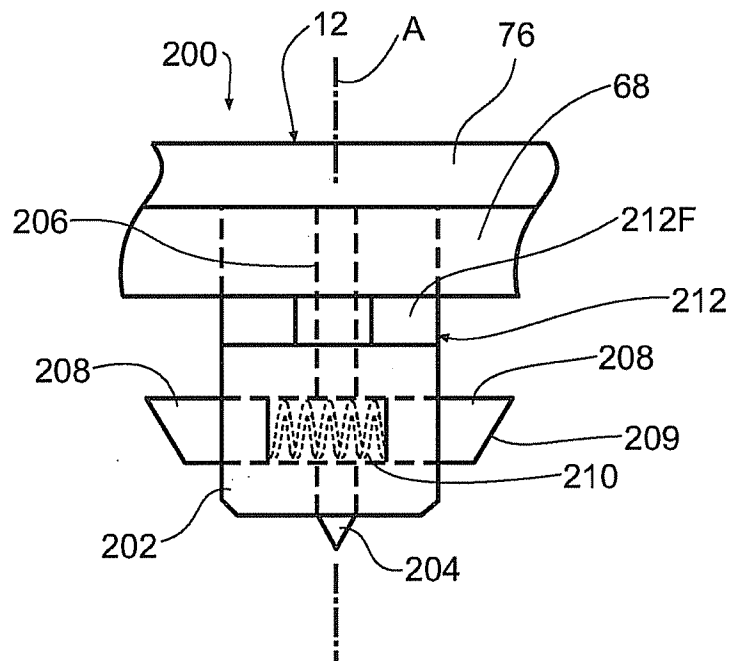


FIG. 19

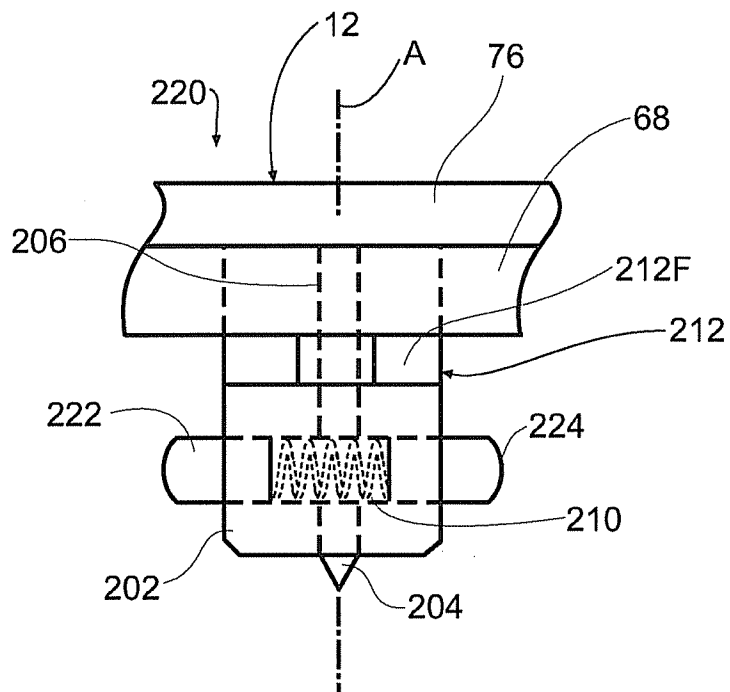


FIG. 20

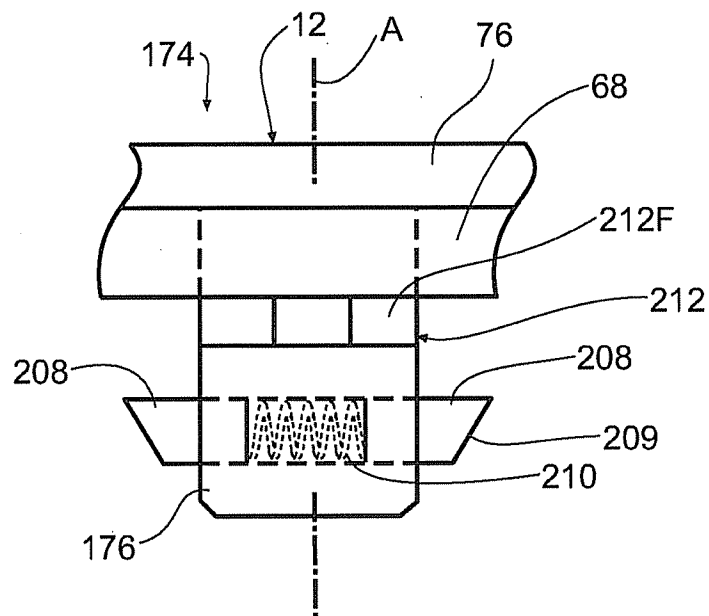


FIG. 21

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2012/046590

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - H01L 31/042 (2012.01)

USPC - 136/244

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8) - E04D 13/18; H01L 31/042, 31/048 (2012.01)

USPC - 52/173.3; 126/623, 680; 136/243, 244, 251, 252

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

PatBase

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 2009/0120484 A1 (NIGHTINGALE) 14 May 2009 (14.05.2009) entire document	1-25
Y	US 2009/0293863 A1 (AUGENBRAUN et al) 03 December 2009 (03.12.2009) entire document	1-25

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

18 September 2012

Date of mailing of the international search report

05 OCT 2012

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

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