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Welcome to this month's issue of **Solar Newsbriefs**, brought to you by the Washington State University Energy Program. Please feel free to forward this issue to those of your colleagues interested in solar energy. For archives of past *Solar Newsbriefs*, visit

<http://www.energy.wsu.edu/solarnewsbriefs.aspx>

Oregon News

Editorial: Oregon Should Not Let Solar Rebates Go Away

The state of Oregon will help residents add solar to their homes, but the money is set to run out. Legislators gave it less money this past session than they did last biennium — \$10 million, rather than \$15 million. And basically demand is so high all of it goes—Bulletin Editorial Board, *The Bulletin*, Nov. 9, 2023: https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/editorial-oregon-should-not-let-solar-rebates-go-away/article_e92e3996-7e63-11ee-a40c-772c85f973d3.html

Oregon's First Large-Scale Solar Park and Farm Hinges on 50-Year-Old Land Use Laws

John Langdon and his brother have experimented with all kinds of crops and techniques on their multigenerational farm in Harrisburg in the Willamette Valley... Nothing has been as controversial as their attempt to add solar panels to 1,100 acres where they currently grow ryegrass... For more than two years, the brothers — who also grow rice and hazelnuts — have been collaborating with the company Qcells, a subsidiary of South Korean solar company Hanwha Q, to create a proposal for Oregon's first large-scale commercial "agrovoltaic" project—Alex Baumhardt, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Nov. 15, 2023: https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2023/11/15/oregons-first-large-scale-solar-park-and-farm-hinges-on-50-year-old-land-use-laws/?mc_cid=9a4d547aeb&mc_eid=f6a5058b4f

October Trade Ally Forums Recap

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's Fall Trade Ally Forums. The forums brought nearly 350 trade allies together from throughout Energy Trust's service areas, with events held in Grants Pass, Bend and Portland. They also included optional for-credit training sessions at each location... If you were unable to attend the 2023 Fall Trade Ally Forums we encourage you to review the presentation slides, posted in the *Insider* pages. Please reach out to [Energy Trust's] program staff if you have questions regarding the presentations or need additional information—Energy Trust of Oregon, *Insider*, Nov. 16, 2023: <https://insider.energytrust.org/october-trade-ally-forums-recap/?the-program=solar>

Conditional Use Permit Approved for Solar Farm Near Fort Rock

The application for the Webster Road Solar Farm proposed north of Fort Rock was recently reviewed by

the Lake County Planning Commission at the Fort Rock Grange... The Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit for the project, and the Goal 3 Exception — required by law — was recommended for approval to the Board of Commissioners. Goal 3 of the Oregon Administrative Rules protects farmland for continued production of food and fiber. As this solar project would exist at least in part on such farmland, it must meet the qualifications for a Goal 3 Exception—*Lake County Examiner*, Nov. 20, 2023: https://www.lakecountyexam.com/townnews/food_industry/conditional-use-permit-approved-for-solar-farm-near-fort-rock/article_dfb2cf0e-8808-11ee-bf01-db9e2704bf75.html

Residential Standard Incentives to Sunset in 2024

Energy Trust’s Solar program is planning to sunset standard residential solar incentives in 2024. Exact dates have not been determined, but the change will likely take effect mid-year—Energy Trust of Oregon, *Insider*, Nov. 20, 2023: <https://insider.energytrust.org/residential-standard-incentives-to-sunset-in-2024/?the-program=solar>

Could Knott Landfill Become Deschutes County's Biggest Solar Power Producer?

Later this decade Deschutes County’s Knott Landfill will start winding down operations as a solid waste disposal site. But county officials say even after the landfill closes it could have a second act as a producer of clean energy. An opportunity is being explored to cover 50 acres of the landfill with solar panels, enough to generate 25 megawatts of renewable power, said Tim Brownell, director of the Deschutes County Department of Solid Waste—Michael Kohn, *The Bulletin*, Nov. 29, 2023: https://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/environment/could-knott-landfill-become-deschutes-countys-biggest-solar-power-producer/article_50795ab6-8b18-11ee-90c9-67e02ba80d2e.html

Tribal, Utility, National and State Leaders Gather in Central Oregon to Celebrate Launch of Major Energy Infrastructure Project

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWS), alongside Portland General Electric (PGE), hosted Tribal, utility, national and state energy leaders at the Pelton Round Butte Hydropower Project in Madras today to celebrate the launch of their partnership to complete a major transmission upgrade in Oregon... In October, CTWS was selected to receive a \$250 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to help upgrade the 230 kV Bethel-Round Butte transmission line – a crucial artery in the region’s transmission system. This infrastructure enhancement will unlock renewable energy potential on the Warm Springs Reservation and bring revenue to historically underserved communities, while connecting resources east of the Cascades to customers in the Willamette Valley—PGE, [Press Release], Dec. 1, 2023: <https://portlandgeneral.com/news/2023-12-01-tribal-utility-national-and-state-leaders-gather-in-oregon>.

USDA Grows Solar Power in Rural Oregon Despite Limited Transmission, Assistance

More farmland across the U.S. will need to host power-generating solar panels for the country to decarbonize the electric grid and meet targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, according to the U.S. Departments of Energy and Agriculture... But that’s not the sell that officials at the USDA’s Rural Development office use to entice Oregon farmers and rural business owners to get onboard... “We estimate that our customers are saving between 40% and 100% on their electricity bills,” said Margaret Hoffman, Oregon director for the rural development office—Alex Baumhardt, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Dec. 1, 2023: [Click here to continue reading](#).

Central Oregon Emerges as a State Leader in Utility Solar Energy Production

Oregon has long been known as a renewable energy powerhouse, thanks mainly to its giant hydro dams on the Columbia River and massive wind farms in Eastern Oregon. But the state is quietly growing in another carbon-free and renewable source of energy — light from the sun—Michael Koh, Capital Press, Dec. 6, 2023: https://www.capitalpress.com/state/oregon/central-oregon-emerges-as-a-state-leader-in-utility-solar-energy-production/article_0b57ce69-2d55-5980-b635-504b2e9e2f37.html

Washington News

Spokane May Reinstate Permit Fees for Solar Energy Systems, EV chargers

Spokane city officials are considering a return to permit fees for installation of solar energy systems and charging stations for electric vehicles... On Monday, city council members conducted the first reading of a draft ordinance which would repeal a prior ordinance that waived such fees. A final reading of the proposal and possible adoption are scheduled for the council's Nov. 6 meeting—Randy Bracht, *The Center Square*, Oct. 31, 2023: https://www.thecentersquare.com/washington/article_c61ada1a-7844-11ee-af83-4b4c06ffca14.html

PSE Grant Pays for Solar Panels at Kent's Alliance Center

A Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Green Power Solar Grant will help The Alliance Center in downtown Kent save money through lower electrical costs. A ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 26 recognized the installation of solar panels at the building, 515 W. Harrison St., covered by a \$96,375 grant from Bellevue-based PSE awarded earlier this year—Steve Hunter, *Kent Reporter*, Nov. 2, 2023: <https://www.kentreporter.com/news/pse-grant-pays-for-solar-panels-at-kents-alliance-center/>

Warm Reception for Community Solar Project at Thurgood Marshall Middle School

Community members joined legislators, teachers, school board members, nonprofit developers, solar sector professionals, donors and lenders on Wednesday, November 1 for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to inaugurate Thurgood Marshall Middle School's Community Solar Project, a newly completed 306-panel solar array on the school's roof... The project is a joint development between the Olympia School District and local clean energy nonprofit Olympia Community Solar, installed by regional solar company Puget Sound Solar and financed by Washington State University's Community Solar Expansion program and a short-term bridge loan from community lender Craft3—Hannah Franklin, *Jolt News*, Nov. 3, 2023: <https://www.thejoltnews.com/stories/warm-reception-for-community-solar-project-at-thurgood-marshall-middle-school,12854>

Proposal for WA's Largest Renewable Energy Project Shows Challenges for Future

Horse Heaven Hills, Benton County — Stand at the top of Jump Off Joe Butte and look north to the valley below... Nestled among the vineyards, the farmlands and the confluence of the Columbia and Snake rivers, you'll see the communities that make up the Tri-Cities, one of Washington's [fastest-growing regions](#)... The wind and solar farm would make a sizable contribution to the state's requirement of reducing carbon emissions 45% by 2030, part of the 2021 Climate Commitment Act, a policy for which Inslee was a chief architect—Conrad Swanson, *The Seattle Times*, Nov. 4, 2023: [Click here to read more](#).

Construction Underway at Goose Prairie Solar Near Moxee; Other Projects on the Way in Yakima County

Long-term goals, such as Washington state officials' hope to eliminate fossil fuel-powered electricity by 2045, can begin with a pile driver and earth moving equipment... There wasn't a solar panel in sight Wednesday morning as construction was underway at the Goose Prairie Solar site 8 miles east of Moxee, but it won't be long before the 80-megawatt project will be providing green energy for local and regional power companies... Goose Prairie is one of four solar projects that have been approved for the State Route 24 corridor of northeast Yakima County, and the first to begin construction—Joel Donofrio, Yakima Herald-Republic, Nov. 6, 2023:

https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/business/construction-underway-at-goose-prairie-solar-near-moxee-other-projects-on-the-way-in-yakima/article_33dd2b90-7a73-11ee-be71-8b3219251c87.html

Already a Clean Energy Leader, WA can Lead on Energy Justice, Too

As a longtime Washington resident, I am proud of our state's legacies of environmental stewardship and climate action. As an elected servant to the people of King County, I have the unique privilege of tending to the necessary work of clean energy and environmental justice state policymaking.

PSE to Nearly Double Its Clean Energy Portfolio by 2025—David Hackney, *The Seattle Times*, Nov. 10, 2023: <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/already-a-clean-energy-leader-wa-can-lead-on-energy-justice-too/>

PSE to Nearly Double Its Clean Energy Portfolio by 2025

Through its early and aggressive acquisition of clean energy resources, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) will deliver more clean energy than originally forecasted in its Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP), a course of action for clean electricity programs and investments to align with policies established by Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA). PSE filed its CEIP update this week to provide a progress report and update to the 2021 CEIP—*Whatcom Talk*, Nov. 15, 2023:

<https://www.whatcomtalk.com/2023/11/02/pse-to-nearly-double-its-clean-energy-portfolio-by-2025/>

Everybody Solar Installs Another Solar Project in Glacier National Park

Everybody Solar announced it has once again partnered with the Glacier National Park Conservancy, marking their third collaborative project. This latest venture, significantly bolstered by the support of Citizen Watch US, through 1% for the Planet, brings to life a pioneering solar array installation that promises to revolutionize the way the Conservancy operates and supports its seasonal workforce—Kelsey Misbrener, *Solar Power World*, Nov. 20, 2023:

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2023/11/everybody-solar-project-glacier-national-park/>

Puget Sound Energy, AutoGrid Aim to Develop a 100-MW Virtual Power Plant by 2025

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and AutoGrid have launched a virtual power plant (VPP) program within Washington state that will manage distributed energy resources including solar, energy storage, electric vehicles, energy efficiency, and demand response. The two partners plan to grow the VPP to 100 megawatts by 2025—Ethan Howland, *Dive Brief*, Nov. 28, 2023:

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/puget-sound-energy-autogrid-pse-virtual-power-plant-vpp/700806/>

Agrivoltaics News

A New Idea Could Ease Tensions Between Farmers and Solar Energy Developers

Solar energy and agriculture can play nice—in fact, solar panels might actually allow farmers to produce better crop yields... It sounds counterintuitive, but that’s what Oregon State University Professor Chad Higgins is hoping to prove with a pilot agrivoltaics project in the Willamette Valley... His project runs contrary to prevailing narratives in rural areas, where encroaching renewable energy facilities are seen as a threat to agriculture... Higgins spoke about the project during a two-day conference held earlier this month in Corvallis by the nonprofit Sustainable Northwest... “It’s not that the solar panels are impeding farm progress,” Higgins told the audience. “They are literally farming equipment that is used to manage a farm resource—light”—Kendra Chamberlain, *Columbia Insight*, Nov. 23, 2023: [Click here to read more.](#)

National News

Announcing \$145 Million to Expand Access to Renewable Energy and Lower Costs for Rural Americans

USDA is announcing \$145 million in funding for 700 loan and grant awards through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to help agricultural producers and rural small business owners make energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy investments to lower energy costs, generate new income, and strengthen the resiliency of their operations. Applications for the next round of Rural Energy for Grants will open on Dec. 31. Applications are due March 31, 2024. Recipients can apply for funding up to \$1 million. For more information here.

- [Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans & Grants in Oregon](#)
- [Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans & Grants in Washington](#)

[Click here for more information.](#)

Clean Energy Grants: 5 Tips for Navigating DOE Applications

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) allocated \$97 billion to the Department of Energy (DOE) to fund energy-related projects, which has spurred the DOE to create numerous new grant and loan programs... We have helped multiple clients apply to a variety of these programs and have identified five tips we suggest DOE grant applicants follow based on this experience—John Decker and Jessica Rollinson, *Renewable Energy World*, Nov. 2, 2023:

[https://www.renewableenergyworld.com/solar/clean-energy-grants-5-tips-for-navigating-doe-applications/?utm_source=renewable energy world newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2023-11-03](https://www.renewableenergyworld.com/solar/clean-energy-grants-5-tips-for-navigating-doe-applications/?utm_source=renewable%20energy%20world%20newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2023-11-03)

New IRA Rules Expand Access to Community Solar

Solar is surging one year after President Biden signed the most significant [climate bill](#) in U.S. history into law. This is particularly true for community solar, which the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) effectively enshrined in federal tax policy for the first time... As a result of the IRA, unprecedented incentives mean a flood of new projects are likely to get off the ground in states that have a regulatory structure in place. But more importantly, the law and the rules for implementing it are opening the door to new business models that will dramatically accelerate the development of community solar and the benefits it

provides to consumers, while also simplifying the process—Kiran Bhatraju, *pv magazine*, Nov. 9, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/11/09/new-ira-rules-expand-access-to-community-solar/>

America's Veterans Are Thriving in the Solar & Storage Industry

While November is a traditional time to celebrate our veterans' military service, it's also a good time to lift up the contribution to the community so many make after their service is complete... Since 2013, veteran employment in the solar and storage industry has grown 63% from 13,192 veterans to 21,533 veterans in 2022. This is, in large part, thanks to programs like Solar Ready Vets. Over the years, the program has evolved to meet the changing needs of veterans entering the civilian workforce, and today, veterans, service members, and their spouses can use the Solar Ready Vets Network to find career opportunities in the solar and storage industry—E'Lon Cohen Hall and Claire Laurentine, *Clean Technica*, Nov. 10, 2023: <https://cleantechnica.com/2023/11/10/americas-veterans-are-thriving-in-the-solar-storage-industry/>

DOE Announces Winners of the 2023 Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s National Community Solar Partnership today announced the winners of the 2023 American-Made Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar. DOE selected five teams to receive a \$10,000 Grand Prize for their community solar projects or programs, which provide meaningful benefits to their subscribers and communities and serve as a replicable model for other community solar projects. These winners' projects will provide clean energy access for over 2,400 low- to moderate-income households. [Pacific Northwest winners include:]

- **Grand Prize Winners**

Olympia Community Solar, Olympia, WA

Overcoming Solar Barriers for Multifamily Housing is a nonprofit-owned community solar project in Olympia, WA that provides more than 30% bill savings to a community of 100% low- to moderate-income residents.

- **Meaningful Benefit Category Special Recognition Winner**

Co-op Solar: Owned by the People

Oregon Clean Power Cooperative, Garibaldi, Nehalem, Phoenix, OR

Co-op Solar is a cooperatively-owned portfolio of two community solar projects that prioritize community resilience and collective ownership in Garibaldi, Nehalem, and Phoenix Oregon.

DOE Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Bulletin, Nov. 15, 2023:

<https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/2023-sunny-awards-equitable-community-solar>

DOE Proposes Easing Environmental Reviews for Certain Storage, Solar, Transmission Projects

The Department of Energy is proposing to ease environmental reviews for certain energy storage, solar and rebuilt or upgraded transmission projects on federal land... Those types of projects — given their limited effect on the environment — would be eligible for “categorical exclusions” under the proposal published Thursday in the Federal Register—Ethan Howland, *Utility Dive*, Nov. 16, 2023:

https://www.utilitydive.com/news/doe-proposal-environmental-review-exclusion-storage-solar-transmission/700010/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Issue:%202023-11-16%20Utility%20Dive%20Newsletter%20%5Bissue:56525%5D&utm_term=Utility%20Dive

U.S. Department of the Treasury, IRS Propose New Rules to Drive Clean Energy Investments

Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) released [guidance on the Investment Tax Credit](#) (ITC) under Section 48 of Internal Revenue Code to spur the investment boom ushered in by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. Today's guidance provides the private sector with additional clarity and certainty in making investment decisions for clean energy projects. Given the new and expanded incentives created by the Inflation Reduction Act, this clarity is critical as companies secure financing for clean energy projects, create good-paying jobs in communities across the United States, and strengthen our nation's energy security—U.S. Department of the Treasury, [Press Release], Nov. 17, 2023: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1920>

US Treasury Swamped by Renewable Low-Income Tax Credit Applications

The US Department of the Treasury said it has received a massive influx of applications for the Energy Community tax credit adder designated for renewable energy projects under the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)... Treasury said that it is overwhelmed by the number of applications, and that the volume of project capacity exceeds the allocation for Energy Community credit next year by as much as 400%-- Ryan Kennedy, *pv magazine*, Dec. 6, 2023: <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2023/12/06/us-treasury-swamped-by-renewable-low-income-tax-credit-applications/>

Recycling

A Huge US Solar Developer Just Committed to Recycling its Solar Panels

EDF Renewables and solar recycling company SOLARCYCLE have signed an agreement in which SOLARCYCLE will recycle EDF's solar panels that get damaged or broken during construction and operation from its grid-scale, distribution-scale, and onsite solar sites... EDF says it chose SOLARCYCLE as a preferred partner because the latter's proprietary technology allows for the extraction of 95% of the value from recycled panels, including silver, silicon, copper, aluminum, and glass— Michelle Lewis, *electrek*, Nov. 6, 2023: <https://electrek.co/2023/11/06/us-solar-panel-recycling/>

Upcoming Conferences and Events

Accelerating the Energy Transition : San Diego, CA, Jan 17-19

Inter Solar North American (ISNA) and Energy Storage North America (ESNA)'s annual solar + storage event. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

2024 DOE Tribal Clean Energy Summit : Temecula, CA, Feb 27-28

Approximately every two years, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Indian Energy along with other DOE offices convenes tribal leaders and energy stakeholders to exchange ideas promoting energy infrastructure development for tribes and tribal communities. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

ASES 53rd Annual National Solar Conference Solar 2024 : Washington D.C., May 20-23

This year's conference theme, "Connecting Technology & Policy," will promote the ASES mission to "accelerate equitable solar adoption and universal sustainable living by educating and building

community.” And will focus on models and tools for negotiating the challenges to advancing renewables by following justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) principles. [For more information click here.](#)

Want to Contribute? If you have information on events, publications or other solar topics that you would like mentioned in an upcoming issue of Solar Newsbriefs, please contact [Anne Whitney](#) at [anne.whitney@energy.wsu.edu](#). While every URL in Solar Newsbriefs is checked for accuracy prior to distribution, URLs may change, and servers may temporarily fail to connect to working URLs.

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