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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

\$50,000 EWEB Sustainability Project Grant Open to Eugene Schools and Organizations

The Eugene Water and Electric Board is awarding \$50,000 to a Eugene community organization, school or public agency that has an idea for a large-scale sustainability project and applies for the 2023 Greenpower grant... The grant's goal is to give an organization the opportunity to fund a project that promotes sustainable energy, furthers energy education or helps to reduce Eugene's carbon footprint—Reilly Norgren, *Daily Emerald*, April 6, 2023: https://www.dailyemerald.com/news/50-000-eweb-sustainability-project-grant-open-to-eugene-schools-and-organizations/article_7e06db0c-d1a5-11ed-9ac8-5f6566fd71a3.html

Amazon Strikes Renewable Power Deal for Oregon Data Centers, Won't Say how Much it's Buying

After a dozen years operating data centers in eastern Oregon, Amazon says it has a deal to buy renewable energy to help power them... The Seattle company announced Tuesday it has begun working with the local power utility, the Umatilla Electric Cooperative, to choose the electricity supply for its huge data center operations near the communities of Boardman and Hermiston—Mike Rogoway, *Oregonian/OregonLive*, April 11, 2023: <https://www.oregonlive.com/silicon-forest/2023/04/amazon-strikes-renewable-power-deal-for-oregon-data-centers-wont-say-how-much-its-buying.html>

EPA Announces \$4 Million for Oregon to Tackle Climate Pollution

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced \$3 million in grant funding to develop innovative strategies to cut climate pollution and build clean energy economies across Oregon. Additionally, the Portland metro area was allotted \$1 million—EPA, *News Release*, April 13, 2023: https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-4-million-oregon-tackle-climate-pollution?utm_medium=email

Here's Where Renewable Power is Increasing (and Where it's Not)

Despite [supply-chain problems](#) amid the lingering effects of the pandemic, 2022 saw major increases in solar and wind power in the United States, though that growth varied by state, according to a report by a nonprofit focused on climate change. In Oregon, the research shows that solar and wind capacity rose

between 2021 and 2022, jumping from 987 to 1,039 megawatts for solar and from 3,649 to 3,851 megawatts for wind. But electrical production actually dropped slightly for each. Wind power far outdistances solar in Oregon, with 9.5 million megawatt hours of electricity produced by wind in 2022 compared with 1.6 million for solar—Robert Zullo, *Oregon Capital Chronicle*, April 14, 2023:

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2023/04/14/heres-where-renewable-power-is-increasing-and-where-its-not/>

Solar Ambassadors to Make Solar More Accessible for Communities of Color

Solar is the future of clean energy, and it's time for everyone to have access to its benefits. That's why Energy Trust is working with community-based organizations in Oregon to make solar more accessible to Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities... The Solar Ambassador pilot program is being developed through the [Solar Energy Innovation Network](#), which is a U.S. Department of Energy program that helps communities develop transformative ways of adopting solar energy—Energy Trust of Oregon, Blog, April 21, 2023: <https://blog.energytrust.org/solar-ambassadors-to-make-solar-more-accessible-for-communities-of-color/>

This Couple Spent \$48,000 to Convert their Portland, Oregon, Home to 'Net Zero': 'The Future is Efficient and Renewable'

When Ryan Shanahan, 41, decided to buy a house in Portland, Oregon, he knew from the start that he wanted his future home to be "net zero" ... This couple spent \$48,000 to convert their Portland, Oregon, home to 'net zero': 'The future is efficient and renewable' ... To be net zero is to cut greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions reabsorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests, for instance, according to the United Nations—Celia Fernandez, *CNBC*, April 22, 2023: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/realestate/this-couple-spent-48000-to-convert-their-portland-oregon-home-to-net-zero-the-future-is-efficient-and-renewable/ar-AA1abRaa>

Oregon's Largest Solar Project Now Online in Gilliam County

Avangrid, a member of the Iberdrola Group, has achieved commercial operation at its 162-MWAC (205 MWDC) Pachwáywit Fields solar farm (also known as Montague Solar) in Gilliam County, Oregon, becoming the state's largest solar PV plant. The facility will deliver energy to large customers and municipalities enrolled in Portland General Electric's (PGE) Green Future Impact program, allowing them to meet their ambitious sustainability and carbon reduction goals—Kelly Pickerel, *Solar Power World*, April 25, 2023: https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2023/04/oregons-largest-solar-project-now-online-in-gilliam-county/?utm_medium=email

Oregon Utility's IRP Calls for 400 MW Energy Storage Development

Portland General Electric announced the procurement of 400 MW(ac) of new standalone energy storage projects from NextEra Energy Resources and Eolian LP, a private developer.

The two projects use 4-hour duration lithium-ion battery modules. Collectively, the 400 MW nameplate capacity projects can provide enough clean power for 260,000 homes at four-hour intervals during peak power usage times such as weeknights from 5 pm to 9 pm—Micael Schoeck, *pv magazine*, May 2, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/05/02/oregon-utilitys-irp-calls-for-400-mw-energy-storage-development/>

Washington News

Sunflower Community Solar Project: Case Study

The [Sunflower Community Solar](https://www.altenergymag.com/article/2023/03/sunflower-community-solar-project/39266) project is helping provide clean energy to empower sustainable solutions to benefit local communities. The project was headed by partners Olympia Community Solar and South Sound Solar, both located in Olympia, Washington. The Sunflower Community Solar project is a community-owned solar project where Olympia Community Solar invited the public to purchase or donate subscriptions to the project's energy generation. More than 400 solar units were purchased and or donated to fund the system, with the project's ownership consisting of 58 individuals and 14 non-profits—Ssilfab Solar, *AltEnergyMag*, April 4, 2023:

<https://www.altenergymag.com/article/2023/03/sunflower-community-solar-project/39266>

Governor Approves Two Yakima County Solar Projects

Gov. Jay Inslee approved two Yakima County solar projects Monday, mentioning the environmental and economic benefits he believes they will bring to the area... “Yakima Valley has been in the green energy business for a long time,” Inslee said, noting the role sunshine and climate play in growing tree fruit, hops and other crops... California-based Cypress Creek Renewables will build the High Top and Ostrea projects. The governor said the two 80-megawatt projects off State Route 24, about 20 miles east of Moxee, will each provide power for 15,000 homes – “homegrown clean energy for the Yakima Valley” — Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, April 17, 2023:

https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/governor-approves-two-yakima-county-solar-projects/article_953aa8a0-dd56-11ed-a804-cb0dc55a7f1e.html?utm_medium=email

Comments Sought for Goose Prairie Solar Project Construction Permit

Public comments are being accepted through May 20 on a construction permit for the Goose Prairie solar project in Yakima County... The state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council conditionally approved the permit, which is needed for construction to begin, at its meeting Wednesday, April 19. It was requested by project developer Brookfield Renewable of New York—Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, April 21, 2023: https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/comments-sought-for-goose-prairie-solar-project-construction-permit/article_d9608612-dfd1-11ed-a7f8-dbda8e6957d0.html

National News

REI's Renewable Energy Goal Climbs to New Heights

REI Co-op set and achieved a [100 percent renewable energy goal](https://www.greenbiz.com/article/reis-renewable-energy-goal-climbs-new-heights) a decade ago. This week, it announced it's upleveling that commitment, pledging to source locally generated renewable energy in each of its 181 stores and supporting clean energy projects... REI's new pledge ties more specificity to its early commitments. In addition to seeking local sources for clean energy (such as deploying more rooftop solar across locations), the company is codifying an approach to benefit local communities — including homeowners, renters and small businesses, according to a release—Sarah Golden, *GreenBiz*, March 30, 2023: <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/reis-renewable-energy-goal-climbs-new-heights>

DOE SolSmart Program Expands to Include Community Solar

SolSmart is a national recognition and technical assistance program for local governments. Its mission is

to expand solar deployment and make it possible for more American homes and businesses to access affordable and renewable solar energy for their electricity needs... DOE announced a further expansion of the SolSmart program... The expansion seeks to add another 500 communities to the program. It also is designed to widen the scope of the program to include other Biden administration priorities, including supporting community solar development and improving equitable access to solar energy—Steve Hanley, *CleanTechnica*, April 6, 2023: <https://cleantechnica.com/2023/04/06/doe-solmart-program-expands-to-include-community-solar/>

Harris Promotes Huge Community Solar Deal in Georgia Visit

Continuing its efforts to promote renewable energy, the Biden administration on Thursday announced what it says will be the largest community solar effort in U.S. history, enough to power 140,000 homes and businesses in three states... Vice President Kamala Harris announced the deal during a visit to the Qcells solar panel factory outside Atlanta—Matthew Daly, *AP News*, April 6, 2023: <https://apnews.com/article/harris-solar-georgia-climate-qcells-greene-5c14f4c4fcede63ff48c7ded36e26f5e>

Solar Utility Workers Require Ruggedized Technology

As demand for solar energy grows, connected, ruggedized technology helps today's limited solar workforce to work in any condition, helping expand the renewable energy infrastructure—Chad Hall, *pV magazine*, April 14, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/04/14/solar-utility-workers-require-ruggedized-technology/>

Tribal Colleges Tap US Energy Funds to Build 'Living Labs'

Tribal colleges and universities around the U.S. will be able to tap nearly \$15 million in grant funding to boost clean energy development as part of the federal government's latest investment in creating more reliable and sustainable electricity generation for Native American communities—Susan Montoya Bryan, *AP News*, April 17, 2023: <https://apnews.com/article/clean-energy-tribal-colleges-solar-42c1e53b18eebb94c78e7e5f0638fad6>

Preserving American Farmland Through Solar

Solar and farming have more in common than many people realize, and they can uplift each other in unexpected ways. The two industries currently have an unprecedented opportunity to work together to alleviate some of their most pressing issues... One of these issues is where developers can site the commercial-scale solar that we must deploy to mitigate climate change and meet our country's clean-energy goals—Geoff Sparrow, *Solar Power World*, April 19, 2023: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2023/04/preserving-american-farmland-through-solar/>

Biden Announces \$80 Million in Solar Power Initiatives

The Biden administration announced more than \$80 million in funding Thursday in a push to produce more solar panels in the U.S., make solar energy available to more people, and pursue superior alternatives to the ubiquitous sparkly panels made with silicon—Isabella O'Malley and Jennifer McDermott, *Associated Press*, April 20, 2023: <https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/us/us-invests-in-alternative-solar-tech-more-solar-for-renters/ar-AA1a5LIC>

19 Groundbreaking US Solar Recycling and Manufacturing Projects Just Got \$82M in Funding

The US Department of Energy just invested \$82 million in 19 innovative projects in 12 states to boost US solar manufacturing and recycling... As part of that \$52 million in funding, \$10 million will come from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to strengthen the US domestic solar supply chain, and \$30 million will be put toward technologies that will help integrate solar energy into the grid—Michelle Lewis, *electrek*, April 20, 2023: <https://electrek.co/2023/04/20/us-solar-recycling-manufacturing/>

House Votes to Rescind Biden’s Solar Tariff Moratorium

The House delivered a rebuke to President Joe Biden on Friday, voting 221-202 to revoke his two-year suspension on imposing new tariffs on solar equipment imports from four Southeast Asian countries that are suspected of acting as conduits for Chinese products—Kelsey Tamborrino, *Politico*, April 28, 2023: <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/04/28/house-vote-biden-solar-tariff-00094388>

Community Solar

Department of Energy Announces New Investments to Accelerate Community Solar in the U.S.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced several new solar energy investments to cut home electricity bills and reduce local pollution, aimed at bringing energy justice to low- and middle-income Americans. These investments are part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda... The National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP) selected 25 teams to participate in the \$10 million Community Power Accelerator Prize competition, which aims to develop a nationwide network of community solar project developers... The DOE also launched the 2023 Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar, an awards program that recognizes best practices in community solar projects and programs that increase equitable access—Anne Fischer, *pV magazine*, April 20, 2023: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2023/04/20/department-of-energy-announces-new-investments-to-accelerate-community-solar-in-the-u-s/>

Reports

Utility-Scale Energy Storage: Technologies and Challenges for an Evolving Grid

The U.S. electricity grid connects more than 11,000 power plants with around 158 million residential, commercial, and other consumers. Energy storage technologies have the potential to enable several improvements to the grid, such as reducing costs and improving reliability. They could also enable the growth of solar and wind energy generation... GAO conducted a technology assessment, on (1) technologies that could be used to capture energy for later use within the electricity grid, (2) challenges that could impact energy storage technologies and their use on the grid, and (3) policy options that could help address energy storage challenges—U.S. GAO, March 30, 2023: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105583>

Study: US Warehouses Present an Untapped Solar Energy-Generating Potential, Could Make Sector More Important for US Economy

Solar energy is gaining momentum in the United States as it continues to become cheaper and more efficient. The country has the potential to produce 78 times the amount of electricity it used in 2020

using only solar photovoltaic (PV) energy. One of the untapped solar energy opportunities in the US is the billions of square feet of warehouse rooftops across the country, according to a [recent study](#) by the Environment America Research and Policy Center—*The Registry*, April 24, 2023:

<https://news.theregistryps.com/study-us-warehouses-present-an-untapped-solar-energy-generating-potential-making-the-sector-potentially-more-important-for-us-economy/>

Automated Permitting Speeds Solar Adoption Across United States

Communities that used SolarAPP+ processed more than 11,000 solar permits and eliminated more than 134,000 days of delays in 2022... The Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus (SolarAPP+) software—developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), in collaboration with industry and the building safety community, and with funding from the U.S. Department of Energy—eases the permitting process and cuts red tape, making it easier for AHJs across the United States to issue permits for residential PV systems and solar-plus-storage systems... NREL released its annual performance report [SolarAPP+ Performance Review \(2022 Data\)](#) on May 3, 2023—Harrison Dreves, NREL, May 3, 2023:

<https://www.nrel.gov/news/program/2023/automated-permitting-speeds-solar-adoption-across-united-states.html>

Conferences and Events

Rooftop Solar Session Wrap & Messaging Strategy Session: May 9, 2023

Join Washington Solar Energy Industries Association (WASEIA) for a virtual post-Legislative Session briefing. WASEIA will be discussing Net Metering (NEM) and Community Solar updates for solar with an eye towards their strategy for the coming year and the 2024 session. For more info and to RSVP:

<https://waseia.org/waseia-rooftop-solar-session-wrap-messaging-strategy-session/>

Solar Washington Webinar: Net Energy Metering in Washington May 10, 2023

Washington State has a net metering law that lets customers of power companies offset their electricity consumption with the production from renewable energy system such as solar panels. Washington Department of Commerce's Nora Hawkins, and Shane Frye, with SnoPUD, both Solar Washington Board Members, will provide an update on the latest legislative session and will discuss the reality of net-metering for residential customers in Washington. To register: <https://www.solarwa.org/calendar>

Advancing Towards 100% Clean Energy: A State-Federal Summit May 17-18, Washington, D.C.

You are invited to attend a conference on how states and the federal government can work cooperatively to accelerate states' efforts to decarbonize. The conference— Advancing Towards 100% Clean Energy: A State-Federal Summit — is part of a new initiative from the US DOE, NREL, LBNL, and the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA)—For more info and to register:

<https://www.cesa.org/event/advancing-towards-100-clean-energy-a-state-federal-summit/>

Understanding PV Module Supply to the U.S. Market in 2023 & 2024: June 6-7. 2-23 Napa, CA

The conference gathers together developers, independent power producers and module suppliers to the U.S. solar market as well as EPCs, banks, investors, technical advisory and testing & certification specialists. For more info and to register: <https://moduletechusa.solarenergyevents.com/>

ASES SOLAR 2023: Transforming the Energy Landscape for All: August 8-11 University of Colorado Boulder + Online

SOLAR 2023: Transforming the Energy Landscape for All will promote the ASES overall goal to “accelerate equitable solar adoption and universal sustainable living by educating and building community. For more info check the press release: https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/ases-national-solar-conference-solar-2023-a-net-zero-emissions-event-301804942.html?tc=eml_cleartime

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 whitneya@energy.wsu.edu

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