



October 5, 2023

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

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Oregon News

New Solar Arrays Move SOU Toward Energy Self-Sufficiency

Southern Oregon University is taking big strides toward becoming the first public university in the U.S. to produce all of the daytime electricity used on its campus, with a \$1.56 million contract signed this month to install new solar arrays and a battery storage facility, and on-site construction work set to begin this winter—*SOU News*, Sept 8, 2023: <https://news.sou.edu/2023/09/new-solar-arrays-move-sou-toward-energy-self-sufficiency/>

Wyden, Merkley Announce \$2.3 Million for Rural Renewable Energy Projects

Last week, Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced that 28 renewable energy projects targeting rural parts of the state will receive \$2.3 million of grant funding. Funding for the projects — mostly [solar panel installations at rural farms and businesses](#) — comes from the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), which includes \$369 billion in federal funding over 10 years to support renewable energy projects, according to a [press release](#) issued jointly by Wyden and Merkley last week—Sander Gusinow, *Oregon Business*, Sept 11, 2023: <https://oregonbusiness.com/wyden-merkley-announce-2-3-million-for-rural-renewable-energy-projects/>

Central Oregonians are Being Offered Solar Rebate Incentives through the Oregon Dept. of Energy

Central Oregonians served by Pacific Power, Central Electric Cooperative and Mid-State Electric Cooperative are now eligible for rebates for solar and solar paired with battery systems. Central Oregon homeowners are eligible for rebates up to \$5,000 for solar and an additional \$2,500 for paired energy storage installed together. Low-income service providers — such as nonprofits, municipalities, or other organizations serving low-income Oregonians — are eligible for up to \$30,000 for solar plus \$15,000 for paired storage—KTVZ , Sept 12, 2023: <https://ktvz.com/community/community-billboard/2023/09/11/oregon-dept-of-energy-offers-homeowners-solar-paired-battery-storage-rebate-incentives/>

Lane Community College Awarded \$100,000 for Renewable Energy Planning

Oregon's Department of Energy has awarded Lane Community College with a \$100,000 grant to fund

renewable energy planning efforts for LCC's Eugene campus, according to college officials... The grant will be utilized to reduce the college's environmental impacts as well as for educational opportunities for its students, the college said—Ryan Bonham, KEZI 9 News, Sept 22, 2023: https://www.kezi.com/news/lane-community-college-awarded-100-000-for-renewable-energy-planning/article_3c662dc4-5977-11ee-811b-476faef3aaa6.html

Pairing Solar Power and Agriculture in the Pacific Northwest

Climate change has caused unprecedented warming, varying precipitation patterns, and higher risks of drought and wildfires across the Northwest. These impacts threaten agriculture, natural resources, and human health in the region. Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable forms of energy can reduce carbon emissions and slow the effects of climate change. However, renewable energy often requires large tracts of land—a requirement that [can conflict with agricultural land requirements](#). Agrivoltaics could present a solution—Morgan Lawrence, *Agriculture Climate Network*, Sept 22, 2023: <https://www.agclimate.net/2023/09/22/pairing-solar-power-and-agriculture-in-the-pacific-northwest/>

Environmental Organization Sees a Sunny Side to J.H. Baxter Plant's Future

An environmental advocacy group wants to turn a shuttered wood treatment plant in Eugene into a solar array... Lisa Arkin, executive director of Beyond Toxics, and Justin Wilbur, of Advanced Energy Systems, told KLCC that there's potential in the 42-acre industrial site... "The system we're proposing is 11.8 megawatts," explained Wilbur. "Which could roughly run – preliminary - about 1,272 homes in terms of how much power this could create"—Brian Bull, KLCC News, Sept 26, 2023: https://www.klcc.org/environment/2023-09-26/environmental-organization-sees-a-sunny-side-to-j-h-baxter-plants-future?utm_medium=email

Shining Light on Oregon's Solar Future: Governor Signs Bills Affecting Solar Facility Rules

In the latest legislative session, Oregon Governor Tina Kotek signed two new bills directly impacting the siting and development of photovoltaic solar power generation facilities. Oregon House Bill (HB) 3179, which expands county jurisdiction over the siting of solar facilities, and HB 3409, which provides for the development of new solar facility siting rules—Ken Pearson, Sara Sayles, *JD Supra*, Sept 26, 2023: <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/shining-light-on-oregon-s-solar-future-6743392/>

Washington News

Senator Murray Announces Nearly \$6 Million for Rural Business Owners, Farmers and Ranchers in WA to Lower Their Energy Costs, Generate New Revenue

U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced \$5,996,625 in grants for farmers, agriculture producers, and rural small businesses in Washington state to make investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements that will lower their energy costs, generate new income, and strengthen the resilience of their operations. This funding comes from the *Inflation Reduction Act* Senator Murray helped pass—the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis—and will be administered through USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) [Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Loans and Grants](#)—U.S. Senator Patty Murray [website], Sept 5, 2023: <https://www.murray.senate.gov/senator-murray-announces-nearly-6-million-for-rural-business-owners-farmers-and-ranchers-in-wa-to-lower-their-energy-costs-generate->

[new-revenue/](#)

Linwood Elementary Becomes First Solar-Powered School in Spokane

Linwood Elementary School just made a big power move... Last year, Spokane Public Schools applied for Washington's Solar Grant Program. Once awarded, Linwood was chosen for its building's conditions, though plans for more schools to go solar are in the works... "This specific system is a 123 panel system. Each panel is 545 watts of power. All in all, it's going to save the school about \$9,000 a year in power savings,"—Allison Martinez, KXLY.com, Sept 15, 2023: https://www.kxly.com/news/linwood-elementary-becomes-first-solar-powered-school-in-spokane/article_b8bea3d2-5428-11ee-8d3d-ab7cfbbbac94.html

Rainier Valley Senior Home Celebrates Completion of Solar Project

On September 13 in the Rainier Valley neighborhood of Seattle, Brighton Senior Housing hosted an event to celebrate the completion of a 100-kilowatt solar project to produce energy on top of the building—Wesley Matlock, *Powerlines* (SCL), Sept 15, 2023:

<https://powerlines.seattle.gov/2023/09/15/rainier-valley-senior-home-celebrates-completion-of-solar-project/>

Eastern Washington Gets More than \$2 Million for Green Energy Investments

Clean energy is coming to eastern Washington, one initiative at a time... Eastern Washington received more than \$2 million from the Washington Department of Commerce to invest in green energy initiatives. Some projects will benefit community services, while others will help businesses run cleaner, with less carbon dioxide—Francesca Maxine Vista, KREM-TV, Sept 27, 2023:

<https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/okanogan-county-spokane-tribe-clean-energy/293-4c023582-f104-4c47-ab3c-cd6e98bc94bc>

Rural Communities to Benefit from Nearly \$5 Million in New State Clean Energy Fund Investments

The Washington State Department of Commerce today announced seven grants totaling \$4.76 million from the state's Clean Energy Fund to enhance dairy digesters and advance clean energy in rural communities. These investments will result in improved air and water quality or soil health, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and local economic benefits—Washington State Department of Commerce, [Press release], Sept 26, 2023: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/news/rural-communities-to-benefit-from-nearly-5-million-in-new-state-clean-energy-fund-investments/>

Solar, Battery Projects in Clark County Get \$250K from State

To tackle the state's ambitious clean energy goals, the Washington Department of Commerce is awarding millions to communities statewide to prioritize solar and battery storage... Clark County groups will receive \$252,950 for planning and installation projects, which will provide a clean backup power source for community buildings and reduce electrical grid strain—Lauren Ellenbecker, *The Columbian*, Sept 27, 2023: <https://www.columbian.com/news/2023/sep/27/solar-battery-projects-in-clark-county-get-250k-from-state/>

Dept. of Commerce Awards \$35.4 Million for Solar Power Projects across the State

On Sept. 27, the Washington State Department of Commerce announced \$35.4 million in grants to

local, state, and tribal governments and non-profits to plan and install solar and battery back-up power systems at community buildings... The projects will provide clean back-up power for critical community needs during power outages, including supporting emergency services, healthcare, and shelters—Cameron Sheppard, *Seattle Weekly*, Sept 29, 2023: <https://www.seattleweekly.com/news/dept-of-commerce-awards-35-4-million-for-solar-power-projects-across-the-state/>

Washington State Department of Commerce request for Proposals for Clean Energy Siting and Permitting Evaluation Report

Commerce is soliciting proposals from firms interested in evaluating state agency siting and permitting processes for clean energy projects, identifying successful models used in other states, and developing recommendations for improving Washington's processes. For more info: [Click here.](#)

Pre-proposal conference Oct 10 at 10 a.m. All prospective Proposers encouraged to attend.

- Email RFP Coordinator Anneka.McDonald@Commerce.wa.gov to receive the conference Zoom meeting link.
- Proposals due November 1, 2023 at 4 p.m. Pacific Time

US Department of Energy Beckons Clean Energy Development at Hanford

The U.S. Department of Energy is rolling out a new program to redevelop some of its lands into clean energy hubs – starting with the former nuclear Hanford site in southeast Washington state. Many Energy officials flew in to meet with industry leaders and nearly 100 community members at the Federal Building in Richland in late September to discuss the [new plan](#)... The government is calling this new plan “Cleanup to Clean Energy,” but developing 30 square miles of sagebrush-dotted land into a power exporter and commercial zone is complex—Anna King, OPB, Oct 1, 2023:

<https://www.opb.org/article/2023/10/01/clean-energy-development-at-hanford-site-washington/>

National News

Guidance for the IRA's 45X, Other Clean Energy Tax Credits will Arrive by Year End, says Treasury

The Treasury Department will provide guidance by the end of the year on the Inflation Reduction Act's uncapped Section 45X manufacturing production tax credit, along with other tax credits in the law, the department's assistant secretary for tax policy said Friday... “The Section 45X tax credit incentivizes domestic production of crucial inputs to the clean energy economy, including blades for wind turbines, wafers for solar panels, electricity inverters, batteries, and critical minerals,” Batchelder said. It is an uncapped credit that can be claimed per unit—Diana DiGangi, *Utility Dive*, Sept 11, 2023:

https://www.utilitydive.com/news/guidance-treasury-tax-credit-inflation-reduction-clean-energy/693262/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Issue:%202023-09-14%20Utility%20Dive%20Renewable%20Energy%20%5Bissue:54513%5D&utm_term=Utility%20Dive:%20Renewable%20Energy

DOE Announces 2023 Sunny Awards Finalists

Today (Sept 11), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) announced seven teams as finalists for the 2023 American-Made Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar. [The Sunny Awards](#) is a prize competition that recognizes community solar projects

and programs that employ best practices to increase equitable access to the meaningful benefits of community solar for subscribers and their communities. The finalists will each receive a \$2,500 prize and advance to compete for \$10,000 Grand Prize Awards and \$5,000 Meaningful Benefit and Engagement Awards. SETO selected these organizations because of their ability to demonstrate how their community solar projects and programs employ best practices to increase access to community solar for low- to moderate-income households, provide household savings, improve community and grid resilience, support community ownership and wealth-building, and create equitable pathways to solar careers and entrepreneurship. Among the finalists are:

- **Overcoming Solar Barriers for Multifamily Housing:** a non-profit owned community solar project in Olympia, Washington that provides over 30% bill savings to a community of 100% low- to moderate-income residents.
- **Co-op Solar: Owned by the People:** a cooperatively-owned portfolio of two community solar projects that prioritize community resilience and collective ownership in Garibaldi, Nehalem, and Phoenix, Oregon.

For more information: Solar Energy Technologies Office, EE Online, Sept 12, 2023:

<https://electricenergyonline.com/article/energy/category/solar/142/1039352/doe-announces-2023-sunny-awards-finalists.html>

DOE Opens \$10 Million Program to Improve Planning, Siting, and Permitting for Large-Scale Renewable Energy

Today (Sept 12), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that applications can now be submitted for a \$10 million funding and technical assistance program to expand state and local government capacity to support the planning, siting, and permitting of large-scale renewable energy projects on private land. This opportunity is part of DOE's new [Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning \(R-STEP\) program](#) and will support the creation of new, or the expansion of existing, state-based programs or initiatives that improve renewable energy siting processes at the state and local levels—For more information see DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy: https://www.energy.gov/eere/articles/doe-opens-10-million-program-improve-planning-siting-and-permitting-large-scale?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

EPA Announces \$4.6b in Pollution Reduction Grants for Pacific Northwest, Alaska

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency launched a \$4.6 billion competition to fund state, local, and Tribal programs to cut pollution, advance environmental justice and deploy clean energy solutions... The new competition is the second tranche of funding from EPA's \$5 billion Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program, created by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act – the largest climate investment in history—U.S. EPA, *News Release Region 10*, Sept 20, 2023:

https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-46b-pollution-reduction-grants-pacific-northwest-alaska?utm_medium=email

DOE Invests More than \$18 Million to Continue Empowering Low-Income, Energy-Burdened Communities to Support Clean Energy-Related Economic Development

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is launching the second round of [Communities LEAP \(Local Energy](#)

[Action Program](#)) to support efforts in disadvantaged communities and those with historical ties to fossil fuel industries to take direct control of their clean energy future... The application deadline is December 14, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. ET. Selections are expected to be announced March 2024. For more information: DOE, Communities Leap, Sept 27, 2023: https://www.energy.gov/communitiesLEAP/articles/doe-invests-more-18-million-continue-empowering-low-income-energy-burdened?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Industry

IREC Selected to Develop Clean Energy Registered Apprenticeship Network

[The Interstate Renewable Energy Council \(IREC\)](#) has been selected by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (US-DOL OA) to serve as an Industry Intermediary for Registered Apprenticeships (RA) in clean energy... This means IREC will lead the Apprenticeships in Clean Energy (ACE) Network, a national coalition of workforce development leaders, in the creation and expansion of RA opportunities in the clean energy industry—Staff, *Solar Builder*, August 7, 2023:

<https://solarbuildermag.com/news/irec-selected-to-develop-clean-energy-registered-apprenticeship-network/>

Recycling

Greenbacker, which Owns Nearly 1GW of Solar, Makes a Deal to Recycle it All

Power producer Greenbacker Energy Company today announced an exclusive, long-term partnership with solar panel recycler SOLARCYCLE to recycle its decommissioned solar panels.

The new partnership provides Greenbacker's fleet – which currently includes over 975 megawatts (MW) of operating solar projects – with a committed partner to recycle, and it provides SOLARCYCLE with a contracted volume of end-of-life panels that will help scale its recycling operations and thus reduce costs, as well as build out a domestic solar supply chain—Kelly Pickerel, *Solar Power World*, Sept 7, 2023: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2023/09/greenbacker-agrees-to-recycle-its-1-gw-of-eventual-decommissioned-solar-panels-through-solarcycle/>

Conferences and Events

Solar with Justice: A National Workshop on the Role of States, Community Organizations, and the Federal Government Virtual, via Zoom, October 13, 2023

The Solar with Justice 2023 National Workshop will foster connections between state agencies and community organizations as well as provide opportunities for both groups to share opportunities and barriers to solar development in under-resourced communities—Clean Energy States Alliance. For more information and to register: <https://www.cesa.org/event/2023-solar-with-justice-workshop/>

2023 Washington State Solar Summit, Seattle, October 20

Hosted by the Solar Washington, the Washington State Solar Summit is an important annual information gathering and networking event for industry stakeholders including manufacturers, installers, utilities, municipalities, legislators/policy makers, educators, students, tribal members,

advocacy organizations/nonprofits, distributors, engineers, financial lenders, consultants and more. For more information and to register: <https://www.solarwa.org/2023solsummit>

Oregon Solar + Storage Conference, Portland, November 7-9

This year 2023 OSSIA Conference is going to be bigger and better than ever: Networking, Career Fair, Continuing Education, Energy Trust of Oregon programs, What's new for Oregon Solar, grants, programs codes, and more. Registration now open. For more information, see the OSSIA Conference website: <https://www.orssia.org/osec>

IREC 2023 Vision Summit, Minneapolis and Virtually November 9

This year's one-day summit will focus on the interconnection of distributed clean energy. The Summit brings together clean energy stakeholders for a deep dive into policies and practices that are essential for all Americans to benefit from clean energy. For more information to to register: <https://irecusa.org/events/irec-vision-summit-2023/>

NW Energy Coalition 2023 Clean & Affordable Energy Conference, Portland, December 6

Panelists will discuss how utility planning should change to deliver equitable and affordable outcomes, the role of energy efficiency and distributed energy resources for vulnerable populations, and how the Bonneville Power Administration needs to modernize to drive forward the clean energy transition. For more info and to register: <https://nwenergy.org/news/2023-clean-affordable-energy-conference/>

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