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Welcome to the March 29th 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

The Living Cully Energy Plan is Complete and on the Living Cully Website

Living Cully is proud to present the Living Cully Community Energy Plan, a neighborhood-scale energy plan that identifies energy conservation and energy generation pilots for the Cully neighborhood. The Energy Plan creates a blueprint for how we can prevent displacement through increased investments in the energy sector. By investing in public education, resilient institutions, affordable housing and community services we can lift up a community-led, anti-displacement vision of climate action.

<http://www.livingcully.org/incoming/2018/03/LC-Community-Energy-Plan-FINAL-6-1.pdf>

Cully Goes Green

While the Northeast Portland neighborhood of Cully was gearing up to release its new plan on tackling clean energy, disaster struck. On March 12, a five-alarm fire erupted at NW Metals, an auto salvage yard near Northeast 75th Avenue and Killingsworth Street. A collaborative effort between Habitat for Humanity, Hacienda Community Development Corporation, the Native American Youth & Family Center and Verde, Living Cully was formed in 2010 to address disparities in the neighborhood by making environmental investments to boost outcomes in education, income, housing and health – By Melanie Sevchenko, *The Skanner News*, March 27, 2018.

<http://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/26719-cully-goes-green>

Oregon Department of Energy Launches Facilities Map

Last month, ODOE launched an interactive web-based map that depicts existing and proposed energy facilities and allows users to view information in multiple ways. It includes all types of energy facilities – ODOT website, March 23, 2018.

<https://energyinfo.oregon.gov/2018/03/23/oregon-department-of-energy-launches-facilities-map/>

Washington News

TransAlta Unveils Plans for Largest Solar Project in State at Side of Former Coal Mine: Tono Solar: Solar Farm would occupy close to 1,000 Acres in South Thurston County, Create 300 Jobs during Construction

The former site of a coal mine could be producing solar power by the end of 2020, according to plans unveiled Tuesday by electricity provider TransAlta. The Calgary-based company has owned the site just south of Bucoda since 2000. The mine shut down in 2006, with reclamation work beginning the following year to restore it to forest and pasture land. Now, TransAlta believes it's a prime location for its solar project – Alex Brown, *The Chronicle*, March 13, 2018.

http://www.chronline.com/business/transalta-unveils-plans-for-largest-solar-project-in-state-at/article_7a79fd70-2714-11e8-bd31-87136236f2b6.html

State Council Hears Update on Ellensburg Solar Project

A state council didn't make a decision Tuesday on a fast-track review for a proposed solar project near Ellensburg. The solar project, proposed by TUUSSO Energy, would cover 200 acres of leased land spread across five sites in the valley. The project would be capable of providing 25 megawatts of power. The state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council met at the Armory in Ellensburg to review the Columbia Solar Project. About 50 people attended the meeting – Karl Holappa, *Yakima Herald*, March 22, 2018.

https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/state-council-hears-update-on-ellensburg-solar-project/article_10c78ea6-2de0-11e8-be29-13e1b3c523ee.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Community Solar

Focusing the Sun: State Considerations for Designing Community Solar Policy

This report summarizes outcomes from the National Community Solar Partnership State Best Practices working group by identifying key differences in state policies that enable community solar and illustrating how various policy design approaches may impact the market—NREL Technical Report, January 2018 available on the NREL website:

<https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy18osti/70663.pdf>

Creative Ways to Finance Solar and Storage Systems

Solar energy storage systems are not yet widely used. And this lack of popularity can make storage systems difficult to finance. A creative and tactical approach to financing these systems was the topic of a panel called "Financing Solar and Storage" held at SEIA Conference in Boston on Feb. 5-6. For an overview of this panel discussion see: Clean Energy Finance Forum, March 5, 2018:

<https://www.cleanenergyfinanceforum.com/2018/03/05/creative-ways-to-finance-solar-and-storage-systems>

National News

180 U.S. Mayors Call For Use of Solar Energy in Updated Letter

A bipartisan group of 180 mayors from across the U.S. have called for increased solar energy usage in an updated letter released Tuesday by Environment America. The first version of the letter, signed by 70 mayors, was released in December. The advocacy organization has also released a list,

"Ten Ways Your City Can Go Solar," which offers tips to city governments including "guarantee solar rights," "partner with utilities" and "eliminate red tape" – by Kristin Musulin, *Smart Cities Dive*, March 22, 2018.

<https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/us-mayors-solar-energy-letter-environment-america/519673/>

Microsoft Buying Power from 750,000 Solar Panels: Company says it's the Largest Corporate Solar Deal in U.S. History

Microsoft just announced what it calls "the single largest corporate purchase of solar energy ever in the United States," buying 315 megawatts from two new solar projects in Virginia as part of its ongoing effort to power its global data centers with renewable energy. The power will come from 750,000 solar panels spread across 2,000 acres at projects called Pleinmont I and II – Todd Bishop *Seattle PI*, March 21, 2018:

<https://www.seattlepi.com/business/tech/article/Microsoft-buying-power-from-750-000-solar-panels-12772358.php>

Global Solar Market Installed 98.9 Gigawatts in 2017

The global solar market grew 29.3 percent last year, with nations installing 98.9 gigawatts of new capacity, according to data from the industry group SolarPower Europe. While more capacity was installed in 2017, the global growth rate slowed last year, down from 49 percent in 2016 – *Clean Technica*, March 19, 2018.

<https://cleantechnica.com/2018/03/19/global-solar-market-installed-98-9-gigawatts-in-2017/>

Technological Innovations

Validation Begins at the NWTC for Powerfield's Easy-to Install Solar Racking

Solar may be one of the fastest-growing sources of renewable energy, but installing a power plant's worth of photovoltaic panels can be a costly, time-consuming endeavor. Powerfield aims to simplify installation through its lightweight solar frames, which are currently being validated at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL's) National Wind Technology Center (NWTC). These frames can be rapidly installed—even by inexperienced crews – NREL, March 5, 2018.

<https://www.nrel.gov/news/program/2018/validation-begins-nwtc-powerfields-easy-to-install-solar-racking.html>

Researchers Figure out How to Generate Power from Falling Raindrops – Which Could Solve the Biggest Problem with Solar Energy

One of the biggest problems plaguing the widespread adoption of solar power is, quite simply, rainy weather. A group of researchers from Soochow University in China has come up with a promising solution to that problem: they've developed solar panels that can generate power from raindrops – Jeremy Berke, *Business Insider*, March 11, 2018.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/solar-panels-could-generate-power-from-raindrops-2018-3>

New Guide for Solar Plan Review and Inspection Checklists

The popular and frequently referenced *Model Inspection Checklist for Rooftop PV* is now updated and expanded to include the latest national and international codes and safety insight for the rapidly expanding solar industry. Created by IREC, the resource provides basic guidelines for reviewing a building permit plan application and inspecting most residential rooftop PV systems – To read more and access the *Checklist* in PDF format see IREC, March 20, 2018:

<https://irecusa.org/2018/03/new-guide-for-solar-plan-review-and-inspection-checklists/>

Conferences and Webinars

GoGreen Conference April 4th

The GoGreen Conference is a sustainability learning experience for business and government decision-makers. Featuring regionally targeted content and recognized leaders from the community, GoGreen works across industry silos to foster peer-to-peer learning and collaborative solutions.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gogreen-conference-seattle-2018-tickets-38641880906?discount=KINGCOUNTY18>

Avoiding the Growing Pains of Community Solar

Learn the best practices for designing a community solar program from three organizations that have experienced the challenges themselves. From tackling community solar policy in Chicago, to developing programs that are effectively coupled with other distributed energy resources, to launching and selling out a 1.5MW system in Nebraska, our experts will give you the blueprints they have created, and how their thinking of community solar has changed over the last three years – *Smart Electric Power Alliance*, April 5, 2018, 11:00 AM PST. To register:

<https://sepapower.org/event/avoiding-growing-pains-community-solar/>

Oregon Solar Energy Conference

The Oregon Solar Energy Conference is the nation's best regional solar conference. In 2017 we hosted over 430 attendees representing over 170 companies. We had over 30 exhibitors and sessions ranged from technical training to business training to solar policy. Join us in 2018 for another amazing event. To be held May 1-3, 2018, at the Portland Crowne Plaza, Portland, OR. To register and check out the conference agenda, see:

<http://oregonsolarenergyconference.com/>

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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