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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

Oregon Community Solar Program

The Oregon Community Solar Program opened for project applications on January 21. Currently they have 33 projects registered. See: <https://www.oregoncsp.org/p/home>. You can see all the registered Project Managers here: <https://www.oregoncsp.org/p/RegisteredProgramManagers/> and project capacity and current status here: <https://www.oregoncsp.org/p/ProjectQueue/> The Program is an easy way for customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power and Idaho Power to access the benefits of solar power.

Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program

HB 2618 (2019) created a new solar and solar plus storage rebate program at the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE). The program issues rebates for solar electric systems and paired solar and solar storage systems for residential customers and low-income service providers in Oregon. For more information, see the ODOE Incentive webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/Incentives/Pages/Solar-Storage-Rebate-Program.aspx>

Oregon's Solar + Storage Rebate Webinar

Come learn about the details about Oregon's new Solar + Storage rebate. This webinar will walk through the basics of the program, including how the rebate interacts with current Energy Trust incentives and how installers can participate. Presented by Angela Crowley-Koch (Oregon Solar Energy Installers Association) and Jennie Hall (Energy Trust of Oregon). View it here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1alr-cRkLcXOS88wSr9k-g-plTBNJm_OI/view

Rural Neighborhood Chooses Off-Grid Microgrids Instead of Paying the Utility

For the Silvies Valley Ranch outside of Burns, Oregon, off-grid microgrids for each of 600 homes under

development makes more financial sense than paying the local utility \$7 million to run utility lines to the ranch. Each home, ranging in size from 2,000 to 6,000 square feet, will have its own solar off-grid microgrid. The systems will consist of solar panels on each home coupled with a Humless Universal System, a battery system of anywhere from 30-70 kWh, depending on the size of the home—Lisa Cohn, *Microgrid Knowledge*, January 20, 2020: <https://microgridknowledge.com/off-grid-microgrids-oregon/>

City/Utility Partnership Leads to Microgrid at Fire Station in Portland, Oregon

The City of Portland, with financial support from Portland General Electric (PGE), has installed a fire station microgrid that will not only ensure power for crucial services, but also train emergency workers in use of the technology—Lisa Cohn, *Microgrid Knowledge*, January 23, 2020:

<https://microgridknowledge.com/fire-station-microgrid/>

Oregon Co-op Law Lets Everyday People Invest in Local Renewable Energy-Episode 96 of Local Energy Rules Podcast

After a novel cooperative law passed in Oregon, residents can invest in solar on their house of worship, their children's school, or the neighborhood public library. For this episode of the Local Energy Rules podcast, host John Farrell speaks with Dan Orzech, General Manager of the Oregon Clean Power Cooperative. This co-op, through its novel structure and rules, allows Oregon residents to earn a return by investing in local renewable energy projects—Maria McCoy, *Institute for Local Self-Reliance*, January 29, 2020:

https://ilsr.org/oregon-clean-power-coop-ler-episode-96/?utm_source=Energy+Self-Reliant+States&utm_campaign=3d2e0c7f78-Energy+Self+Reliant+States+1+2+15+8+2015+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_86e661ed1e-3d2e0c7f78-83182593

Peter Greenberg: A Chat with the Guru of Solar

You receive a news tip about Peter Greenberg. It notes that the Albany resident, who runs Energy Lighting Inc. out of his home, has done some interesting volunteering on solar projects internationally. So you request an interview. It turns into a two-hour treatise on solar power—James Day, *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, February 2, 2020:

https://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/peter-greenberg-a-chat-with-the-guru-of-solar/article_a6aa2244-1b2e-5aec-93a7-e0b5ac60c631.html

Upcoming Oregon Solar Technical Trainings

OSEIA is working with Energy Trust of Oregon to hold 6 Oregon Solar Technical Trainings in Spring 2020

- Operations & Maintenance (3 sessions)
- Solar PV Systems Based on the 2017 NEC (1 session)
- Polar PV Systems Install Best Practices & Energy Trust Requirements (2 sessions)

For information on dates and locations see: <https://www.oseia.org/statewide>

Washington News

Community Solar Bills 2248, 6223 Hearings

On January 16, 2020, the Washington State House Environment Committee held a hearing on HB 2248, the community solar bill. Most organizations supported the bill as a major contribution to Washington's climate policy, but there was some opposition. Arguments for and against are summarized, please look

at them for information and comment. A companion bill, SB 6223, had a hearing January 22 in the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Technology (see arguments below). Continue reading at: *JUUSTIVE Washington*, January 16, 2020: <https://juustwa.org/community-solar-bill-2248-hearing/>

A&R Solar Selected to Install Solar on Olympia's Hands On Children's Museum

After a 4 month competitive procurement process, a committee made up of the City of Olympia, the Hands On Children's Museum, and Olympia Community Solar (OCS) staff selected A&R Solar to install solar on the Museum. This installation, aka the Hummingbird Project, will be the first community solar project developed by OCS. When completed, it will be one of the largest solar projects in Thurston County. In December, the Humingbird Project was awarded a grant from the TransAlta Coal Transition Fund to help cover costs. For more information on the Hummingbird Project see:

<https://olysol.org/hummingbird-project/>

Community Solar Project Could Be Built this Spring

Okanogan County PUD commissioners set the bill credit rate for the Sunny Okanogan Community Solar project at five cents per kilowatt-hour of production, applied to the bills of those who participate in the project, which could be built this spring—*Gazette-Tribune*, January 13, 2020: <http://www.gazette-tribune.com/news/community-solar-project-could-be-built-this-spring/79643/>

<http://www.gazette-tribune.com/news/community-solar-project-could-be-built-this-spring/79643/>

Case Studies on Front & Centered Member's Pursuit of Solar Energy

Two case studies presented in this document examine the efforts undertaken by two member organizations of Front & Centered to plan for the installation of solar energy generation projects on the rooftops of their buildings. Their efforts provide a crucial snapshot of the current state of access to solar energy in communities of color and low-income communities in Washington State—Front and Centered website, January 2020: <https://frontandcentered.org/case-studies-on-front-centered-members-pursuit-of-solar-energy/>

Bite-Sized Solar Powers Programs at Two Local Nonprofits

Two Snohomish County nonprofits have some new funders — 417 solar energy units in Arlington. The Snohomish County Public Utility District teamed up with Everett's HopeWorks and the Community Resource Center of Stanwood-Camano to pass along energy bill savings to income-qualified clients.

Julia-Grace Sanders, *HeraldNet*, January 21, 2020: <https://www.heraldnet.com/news/bite-sized-solar-powers-programs-at-two-local-nonprofits/>

Snohomish County PUD Awards Solar Energy Grants

Two Snohomish County non-profit organizations have been awarded PUD solar energy grants as part of a four-year pilot program to expand solar benefits to income-qualified customers. The grants will generate energy savings that will be directed back into community programs. As grant recipients, the Community Resource Center of Stanwood-Camano (CRC) and Everett-based HopeWorks will each receive a combination of bill credits and state incentives based on the energy generated by 417 76-watt solar units in the PUD's Arlington Community Solar array —*The Monroe Monitor Valley News*, January 31, 2020: <https://monroemonitor.com/snohomish-county-pud-awards-solar-energy-grants/>

Inslee Appoints Hirsh to Chair Energy Advisory Committee

Washington Governor Jay Inslee has appointed NW Energy Coalition Executive Director, Nancy Hirsh, to co-chair a 27-member advisory committee to guide an update to the state energy strategy. The committee's charge is to identify policies and actions to ensure competitive energy prices, foster a clean energy economy, and ensure the state meets its greenhouse gas reduction goals. Formed in response to the 2019 Clean Energy Transformation Act, which calls for 100% clean energy in Washington by 2045, the committee will be co-chaired by Reeves Clippard, CEO of A&R Solar—Sean O'Leary, NW Energy Coalition, January 13, 2020: <https://nwenergy.org/featured/inslee-appoints-hirsh-to-chair-energy-advisory-committee/>

Researchers Advance Solar Material Production

A Washington State University team has developed a more efficient, safer, and cost-effective way to produce cadmium telluride (CdTe) material for solar cells or other applications, a discovery that could advance the solar industry and make it more competitive—Tina Hilding, *WSU Insider*, January 27, 2020: <https://news.wsu.edu/2020/01/27/researchers-advance-solar-material-production/>

Building Economic Sovereignty: A Model for Renewable Energy Emerges in the Spokane Nation

Since 2015, Jason Campbell has been CEO of Sovereign Power, an energy company that is 100 percent Spokane-owned. The company is small, but it has big plans; the idea, as Campbell puts it, is to become a “model for nation-building in the energy sector”—Steve Dibb, *Nonprofit Quarterly*, Jan 22, 2020: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/building-economic-sovereignty-a-model-for-renewable-energy-emerges-in-the-spokane-nation/>

Dual Land Use: Co-Location of Solar and Farm Land

The Buzz: State Pollinator-Friendly Solar Initiatives

Pollinators play a critical role in the production of food and seeds. Approximately one quarter of agricultural production in the United States depends upon pollinators, predominantly bees. Since 2006, bee population tracking has recorded declines of 30 percent annually. Loss of habitat is one reason the number of pollinators has decreased. Seven states – Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, South Carolina, and Vermont – have enacted legislation to promote pollinator-friendly solar development. A new white paper by the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) provides an overview of these state efforts and offers suggestions for what other states can do to promote solar while also creating or preserving healthy habitats for pollinator. To read the abstract and download the paper see: Georgena Terry, *CESA*, January 22, 2020: <https://www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/state-pollinator-friendly-solar-initiatives>

The Evolution of Rural Solar: from Panel Monocrops to Multiple Land Uses

In farming, companion planting of certain crops in close proximity can provide an array of benefits, from pest control, to flavor enhancement, to increased productivity. The same concept can be applied to rural solar projects, which have the opportunity to integrate with other land uses such as crops or pollinator-friendly plantings and create win-win outcomes for rural communities—Katie Siegner, Genevieve Lillis, *Rocky Mountain Institute*, January 6, 2020: <https://rmi.org/solar-panels-the-ultimate-companion-planting-tool/>

National News

Community Solar: Ready for the New Decade

As the U.S. solar industry entered a phase of rapid growth over the last decade, there was a vast underserved market of households and businesses that could not be served by traditional rooftop solar. Community solar emerged to fill that gap and serve customers looking for access to the benefits of solar without having to install it directly on their property. Instead of worrying about whether they had enough sunlight exposure, access to financing, or any property at all, customers could instead “subscribe” to a share of a larger off-site community solar facility and get credit for their share of the power production on their utility bill—Sara Johnson Phillips and Sara Bergan, *Power Magazine*, February 3, 2020: https://www.powermag.com/community-solar-ready-for-the-new-decade/?pagenum=2#.Xjhr-nW_NPs.email

The State of Solar Panel Recycling in the U.S.

The U.S. has more than 2 million solar installations. This means there are tens of millions of solar panels on roofs and racking systems. Solar energy is fantastic for reducing carbon emissions and promoting energy independence, but what happens at the end of the panel’s 30-year lifespan?—Sarah Lozanova, Earth911, February 4, 2020: <https://earth911.com/eco-tech/the-state-of-solar-panel-recycling-in-the-us/>

Reports

New Guide for Utility Participation in Solar Programs for Low-Income Customers

Low-income solar rights advocates (GRID Alternatives, Vote Solar and Environmental Law & Policy Center) released [*Principles and Recommendations for Utility Participation in Solar Programs for Low-Income Customers*](#) today as part of an ongoing campaign to ensure that local, clean, affordable solar energy is available to everyone, regardless of their income level or housing type. For more information see: Melanie Santiago-Mosier, *Vote Solar*, January 16, 2020: <https://votesolar.org/policy/policy-guides/low-income-solar-access/new-guide-utility-participation-solar-programs-low-income-customers/>

Upcoming Conferences

Oregon Solar Energy Conference: Portland Crowne Place, April 28-30, 2020

The Oregon Solar Energy Conference is the nation’s best regional solar conference. In 2019 we hosted over 500 attendees representing over 220 companies. We had over 30 exhibitors & sponsors and 57 sessions ranging from technical training to business training to solar policy. The conference offered over 20 hours registered for NABCEP CE. Join us in 2020 for another amazing event. To submit session proposals and to register see: <https://www.oseia.org/osec> to register for the concurrent Oregon Solar Career Expo, register here: <https://www.oseia.org/osec/careerexpo>

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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