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Welcome to this week'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

Solar Developer Disputes Blockage of 80-Acre Project on Farmland

A solar power developer claims that Oregon's land use laws don't prohibit the construction of an 80-acre solar project on high-value farmland in Jackson County – Mateusz Perkowski, *Capital Press*, February 14, 2018.

<http://www.capitalpress.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2018180109931>

Solar Company Building Solar Farms in the Mid-Willamette Valley

Cypress Creek Renewables, a developer that sells electricity to utility companies and already operates seven solar sites in Oregon, is starting farms in Salem, Silverton, Gervais, Turner and Grand Ronde. To learn more, watch the video on the *Stateman's Journal* website:

<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/videos/money/business/2017/10/21/solar-company-building-solar-farms-mid-willamette-valley/106802174/>

Washington News

McKinstry Names Bellevue College "Champion of Sustainability"

McKinstry, a design-build-operate-maintain firm focused on efficiency in the built environment, today named Bellevue College a "Champion of Sustainability" for their contributions to sustainability in the built environment. Some of the college's sustainability highlights include LEED Gold-certified buildings, two solar installations, a green roof, rain gardens, a bike rental program and a student garden – *The Registry*, February 2018.

<https://news.theregistryps.com/mckinstry-names-bellevue-college-champion-sustainability/>

Avista Unveils Plans for Catalyst Building in Spokane's University District

Today, Avista Development unveiled plans for the Catalyst Building, the first in a series of developments, in Spokane's University District. The 150,000 square-foot building will be the first

office building in the state constructed out of environmentally friendly cross-laminated timber (CLT), and will be connected to an energy resource sharing eco-district planned for the development. Eastern Washington University will be the building's primary tenant, moving their Computer Science, Electrical Engineering and Visual Communication Design programs from its Cheney campus to the new Spokane location. Designed to be net zero ready, the building will generate the energy it uses through solar panels on the roof and additional renewable energy technologies. Read more at *McKinstry News*, February 6, 2018.

<https://www.mckinstry.com/2018/02/06/avista-unveils-plans-for-catalyst-building-in-spokanes-university-district/>

Solar Jobs

Solar Job Census

Each year, The Solar Foundation releases its National Solar Jobs Census, a report that tracks employment in the U.S. solar industry. It is the most comprehensive analysis of the solar labor market in the United States, and is a critical resource in educating policymakers and the general public about the economic impact of solar energy. – To read more and access the full report, see SEIA website at:

<https://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-jobs-census-2017>

Data Shows Solar Energy Really is a Leading American Job Creator

The rapid expansion of solar energy over the past few years has created hundreds of thousands of well-paying American jobs. The most recent National Solar Jobs Census published by The Solar Foundation found there were 260,077 solar workers in the United States as of 2016. That year, one in 50 new U.S. jobs were in solar, and the industry added jobs 17 times faster than the overall economy – *The Hill*, January 21, 2018

http://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/369823-data-shows-solar-energy-really-is-a-leading-american-job-creator?utm_term=0_5eaa0aab62-98e92a2937-44233005&mc_cid=98e92a2937&mc_eid=16014616fc&utm_content=bufferf1c5b&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

National

Trump's Solar Tariffs Go Into Effect Today. So What?

While it's true that there is likely to be some short-term pain for solar PV installers, and the tariffs may well cost some solar PV installation jobs (currently the fast-growing job in the U.S., which could take a 23,000-job hit), this reduction is likely to be jobs that would have been created in the near future but now will not be, not layoffs of current installers. To read more on this hot topic see *Forbes*, February 7, 2018:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshuarhodes/2018/02/07/trump-solar-panel-tariff/#65f1bad6376d>.

Who Will Win the U.S. Solar Tariff Fight?

Recent news suggests that the United States solar tariff equates to doomsday for the solar industry. However, there are many additional factors at play that add complexity to future projections – including politics, the economy, and technology. Although many in the industry agree the tariff will slow the

growth of solar installations, experts are mixed in the extent to which they believe this will harm the national industry – *Clean Energy Finance Forum*, February 6, 2018.

<https://www.cleanenergyfinanceforum.com/2018/02/06/who-will-win-the-us-solar-tariff-fight>

A Powerful Mix of Solar and Batteries is Beating Natural Gas

Natural gas is getting edged out of power markets across the U.S. by two energy sources that, together, are proving to be an unbeatable mix: solar and batteries – *Bloomberg*, February 13, 2018

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-12/a-powerful-mix-of-solar-and-batteries-is-beating-natural-gas?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Issue:%202018-02-13%20Utility%20Dive%20Storage%20%5Bissue:14033%5D&utm_term=Utility%20Dive:%20Storage

Technological Innovations

Modernizing Rooftop Solar Tandem Solar Panels

Did you know there are alternatives to standard silicon solar panels? Or that someday soon, you might be able install a solar panel that is 50 percent more efficient than the average silicon PV solar panel? That's exactly what Iris Photovoltaics Inc. (Iris PV) is aiming to produce. The Berkeley, California-based company is working to modernize how silicon solar panels are manufactured. In addition, they are attempting to increase the efficiency of PVs to a range of 25-30 percent – *Renewable Energy World*, February 12, 2018.

<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2018/02/modernizing-rooftop-solar-with-tandem-solar-panels.html>

Putting the 'Farm' Back in Solar Farms

Minnesota will be included in a study to help federal researchers test the potential of pollinator-friendly habitat and fruit and vegetable crops around solar arrays. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) will plant vegetation this year at three Minnesota solar installations owned by Enel Green Power. The sites are among 15 around the country that will be part of the research project. "We want to figure out what plants and what type of species will thrive, and how, and why, in these environments," said Jordan Macknick, an NREL analyst. The plants can provide economic and environmental benefits over covering the ground with gravel or turf grass, as is often done. The stakes for both the industry and environment will only grow as the amount of land used for solar projects also expands. NREL predicts 3 million acres will be devoted to solar farms by 2030, and 6 million by 2050 – *Renewable Energy World*, January 24, 2018.

<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2018/01/putting-the-farm-back-in-solar-farms.html>.

Webinars

Unexpected Benefits to Commercial Solar in the New Tax Bill – February 20

The 2018 Tax Plan has some unexpected benefits for commercial solar. Commercial solar installers can now depreciate 85% of the system cost in the first year of its operation, and the corporate tax rate has been lowered by 40%. In a year where there has been a lot of negative policy news for the solar industry, the new tax bill is some welcome good news. In this webinar we will design a simple commercial solar installation, and calculate the financial returns of cash and loan financed projects.

Finally, we will give some steps on ways to sell solar under the new tax plan. For more information and to register for this webinar to be held February 20, at 11: AM PT see:

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2018/01/webinar-unexpected-benefits-commercial-solar-new-tax-bill/>

Solar +Storage for Public and Affordable Housing

This webinar will provide an overview of the technology, value proposition, and financing options for projects that pair solar with battery storage (solar+storage) for public and affordable housing. Clean Energy Group Vice President Seth Mullendore will present on how combining solar+storage can yield value for multifamily properties, including how it can reduce demand and cut energy expenses – to read more and to register, see *Clean Energy States Alliance's* Events and Webinars webpage at:

<https://cesa.org/webinars/solar-storage-for-public-and-affordable-housing/?date=2018-02-22>

Events

Snohomish PUD to host Community Open House February

Snohomish County PUD is designing and building a Microgrid and Clean Energy Technology Center, located east of the Arlington Airport on 59th Avenue NE. In addition, the PUD is planning a Community Solar program at the site. Community Solar programs make it easier for all customers to benefit from solar energy by leasing or purchasing shares at a community site without needing a sunny roof or funding for their own solar panels. Community Open House Wednesday, February 21, 5:00 -7:00 P.M.

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1109942844595&ca=5d48632c-e7e7-4440-8dcd-fa837928599c>

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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