



December 1, 2022

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<http://www.energy.wsu.edu/solarnewsbriefs.aspx>

Oregon News

Southeast Salem Set to Get Oregon's First-Ever Community Microgrid to Power Homes, Services during Outages

The first-ever community microgrid in Oregon set to be created in southeast Salem could mean more residents will keep electricity during the next power outage. The small-scale electrical grid, which combines energy sources like a generator and solar panels, will provide emergency power to Salem's Public Works building, 96 units in six apartment buildings, 34 homes, four government buildings and one business in the event of a power outage like the 2021 ice storm—Whitney Woodworth, *Salem Statesman Journal*, Oct. 31, 2022:

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/local/2022/10/31/southeast-salem-set-to-get-oregon-first-community-microgrid-generator-solar-panel-for-power-outages/69597021007/>

Renters, Homeowners can Save Money through Community Solar as Oregon Program Expands

With multiple campuses across the Willamette Valley, Chemeketa Community College spends over \$1 million a year on electricity. So when Isaac Talley heard the college might be able to save money by supporting solar farms, he was eager to learn more. Talley, the college's technical development manager for facilities, enrolled Chemeketa in Oregon's community solar program, which allows any customer served by the state's major electric utilities to earn electricity bill credits from a renewable project without having to install or maintain panels themselves—Rachel Alexander, *Salem Reporter*, Nov. 17, 2022:

<https://www.salemreporter.com/2022/11/17/renters-homeowners-can-save-money-through-community-solar-as-oregon-program-expands/>

Federal Grant to Help with Fort George Brewery's Solar Project

A solar panel project planned at Fort George Brewery's property in Uniontown will get help from a federal grant. U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley announced Friday that the Astoria

brewery will receive a \$144,460 federal rural development grant to install a large, roof-mounted solar panel—Nicole Bates, *The Daily Astorian*, Nov. 21, 2022:

https://www.dailyastorian.com/news/local/federal-grant-to-help-with-fort-george-brewerys-solar-project/article_4730e528-6792-11ed-b044-3bd5e004fea0.html

Grape Solar's Oregon Solar Industrial Park (OSIP) to Be the First of Many

[Grape Solar, Inc.](#) has now secured commitments from leading manufacturers of solar panel components to be part of its first industrial park. The Oregon Solar Industrial Park (OSIP) is a vision [Grape Solar has planned since the company started more than a decade ago in Eugene, Oregon, in 2009](#). Grape Solar has positioned itself as the leading innovator, chief architect, and developer of five future solar industrial parks in different regions across the U.S.A., with planned capacity of 100GW requiring \$40 billion total investment from private and public partnerships—*Newswire* [Press Release], Nov. 22, 2022: <https://www.newswire.com/news/grape-solars-oregon-solar-industrial-park-osip-to-be-the-first-of-many-21883274>

Utility Scale Developer Input Needed. Stakeholder Survey: Energy Facility Siting Program Evaluation

The Oregon Department of Energy (Department) has recently contracted with an independent consulting firm, Merina+Co, to conduct a comprehensive program evaluation of the Department's Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) siting process. The intent of this evaluation is to identify opportunities to make the process more efficient, effective, and responsive to stakeholder needs and concerns. As part of this evaluation, Merina+Co is conducting outreach to a broad group of external parties and stakeholders to gather a broad view of perspectives regarding current strengths and weaknesses of the process and solicit ideas and opinions for how to improve the process. This survey represents the first step in conducting this outreach and consists of a series of questions focused on assessing views, perspectives, and ideas for how to improve the siting process. ***To weigh in, please submit your answers to the survey questions by December 6, 2022. [Click here to begin survey.](#)***

Washington News

Boatbuilding School Has Solar Panels Installed

The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding has installed 164 solar panels on the roofs of the Marine Systems and Hammond Boatbuilding shops, a move expected to save the school some \$9,000 in electrical costs annually. "Not only will the installation provide a long-term financial benefit to the school but it also aligns with the school's goal to be a good environmental steward in the community," while embracing technological advancements, according to Executive Director Betsy Davis in a press release—*Peninsula Daily News*, Oct. 17, 2022: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/weather/topstories/boatbuilding-school-has-solar-panels-installed/ar-AA132QFj?cvid=e6691fcbc90d4c4aa81dd4fba22dfd2e#image=1>

State Officials Visit Solar Farm Sites on Eastern Edge of Yakima County

There are plenty of detailed plans and architectural drawings to show members of the state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council what proposed solar farms in eastern Yakima County would look like if approved. But true to their name, council members and staff did some in-person "site evaluation" holding an in-person meeting near the High Top and Ostrea solar farm sites along State Route 24 and visiting the proposed Wautoma Solar Project site just across the county line in northwest Benton

County—Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Nov. 4, 2022:

https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/business/state-officials-visit-solar-farm-sites-on-eastern-edge-of-yakima-county/article_ffde3d4c-5b25-11ed-8085-ab01386c2c0d.html

Transmission Lines Could Hold Back Washington's Clean-Energy Ambitions

Washington state urgently needs to start planning to transmit wind and solar power across the Cascade Range to Western Washington to meet the state's ambitious clean-energy goals, according to a report sent to legislators this week. High-voltage power lines can be expected to take 10 to 20 years to site, permit and build, according to the report prepared by the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Nov. 4, 2022: https://www.capitalpress.com/climate_changed/transmission-lines-could-hold-back-washingtons-clean-energy-ambitions/article_77e2f78e-5b89-11ed-97bf-9fa6379c4476.html

Snohomish County PUD Marks Completion of Microgrid and Clean Energy Center

Washington State's Snohomish County PUD recently hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion of its Arlington Microgrid and Clean Energy Center. The project is located near the Arlington Airport and demonstrates multiple uses of energy storage, including utility-scale battery energy storage, residential battery energy storage and vehicle-to-grid charging systems—Paul Ciampoli, *American Public Power Association*, Nov. 10, 2022: <https://www.publicpower.org/periodical/article/snohomish-county-pud-marks-completion-microgrid-and-clean-energy-center>

State Agency Approves Expedited Processing for Yakima County Solar Projects

Two Yakima County solar projects appear to be on the fast track to approval, while another project just across the county line had another step added to its state evaluation process. The state's [Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council](#) unanimously approved an order granting expedited processing to Cypress Creek Renewables, the company seeking to develop High Top and Ostrea solar farms along State Route 24, near the eastern Yakima County line—Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Nov. 17, 2022: https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/state-agency-approves-expedited-processing-for-yakima-county-solar-projects/article_ab1e87dc-65e1-11ed-824f-bb0bab00c3b2.html

Solar Panels Installed on Quixote Village Tiny Homes will Save Nonprofit Thousands per Year

Kirk Haffner knew it would be a risk taking on a solar installation project for free. South Sound Solar is used to working with nonprofits and other housing providers in the region, but Quixote Village posed unique challenges. With 30 tiny homes and a large community building, converting the village to one solar power system was a feat like none other — all while footing a \$30,000 bill—Ty Vinson, *The Olympian*, Nov. 20, 2022: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/solar-panels-installed-on-quixote-village-tiny-homes-will-save-nonprofit-thousands-per-year/ar-AA14kyEC>

Solar Projects Progress over Yakima County's Protest

A Washington state panel has fast-tracked the side-by-side High Top and Ostrea solar projects over the objection of Yakima County commissioners. The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council ruled Nov. 15 that the twin solar projects qualify for a quicker approval process, partly because they are consistent with the county's land-use laws—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Nov. 23, 2022:

https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/rurallife/solar-projects-progress-over-yakima-countys-protest/article_015519e2-6a95-11ed-b2ce-4f6347088e77.html?utm_source=capitalpress.com&utm_campaign=%2Fsearch%2Fsavedsearch%2Fexecute%2F%3Fd1%3Dyesterday%25209am%26d2%3Dtoday%25209am%26xd%3D1%26a%3D3e082132-d88f-11e8-bead-f7dd0e2fcfb2%26s%3Dstart-time%26sd%3Ddesc%26title%3DDon%2520Jenkins%2520notification&utm_medium=followed%20notification%20email&utm_content=read%20more

Yakima County Commissioners Unhappy State Agency OKs Solar Farms

Yakima County commissioners are unhappy with the Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council's recent decision to expedite the approval process for two proposed solar farms east of Moxee. On Nov. 15, EFSEC agreed to expedite the approval process for two solar farms — High Top and Ostrea — that would be sited along State Route 24 east of Moxee in the Block Rock area. The two projects proposed by a single developer would each cover 1,600 acres and produce 80 megawatts—Phil Ferolito, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Nov. 28, 2022: https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/government/yakima-county-commissioners-unhappy-with-efsecs-decision-to-allow-solar-farms-to-move-forward/article_6cf3379c-6cf7-11ed-9d5a-2f280a8cc7d9.html

Hearing Postponed for Yakima County Solar Projects

At the request of the developer, a public hearing for two Yakima County solar farm projects scheduled for Tuesday evening has been postponed by officials with the state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council. At the request of the developer, a public hearing for two Yakima County solar farm projects scheduled for Tuesday evening has been postponed by officials with the state's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council—Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Nov. 28, 2022: https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/government/hearing-postponed-for-yakima-county-solar-projects/article_26fd8a50-6f52-11ed-9f37-473ea0bcd1b1.html

National News and Reports

U.S. DOE Announces 31 Finalists for \$100,000 Prize for Community Solar Projects and Programs

The Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar is a \$100,000 prize competition that recognizes community solar projects and programs that use or develop best practices to increase equitable access to community solar for subscribers and their communities. [Finalists listed from WA and OR]

Hummingbird Community Solar Project, Olympia Community Solar, Olympia, WA, and **Oregon Shakespeare Festival Community Solar**, Oregon Clean Power Cooperative, Talent, OR. For more information see—Anne Fischer, *pvmagazine*, Nov. 10, 2022: <https://pvmagazine-usa.com/2022/11/10/doe-announces-31-finalists-for-100000-prize-for-community-solar-projects-and-programs/#content>

NREL & SMUD Launch Groundbreaking Automation Tool for Interconnecting Customer Solar to the Grid

The NREL-developed PREconfiguring and Controlling Inverter SET-points (PRECISE) software helps utilities identify optimal inverter modes and settings for distributed solar. PRECISE is a standalone system that allows utility engineers to seamlessly interconnect PV generation, significantly cutting the wait time and costs for customers. PRECISE: Cutting Costs and Delays for Rooftop PV—U.S. Dept. of

Energy, *Clean Technica*, Nov. 13, 2022: <https://cleantechnica.com/2022/11/13/nrel-smud-launch-groundbreaking-automation-tool-for-interconnecting-customer-solar-to-the-grid/>

Tax Rebates for Solar Power Ineffective for Low-Income Americans, but a Different Incentive Works

Tax rebates for installing residential solar power have done little to spur adoption in low-income communities in the United States, while a less common incentive seems to succeed, according to new research using AI and satellite images. In a [new study](#) that used artificial intelligence to interpret a decade's worth of satellite images, Stanford University researchers find that low-income communities were far less motivated than high-income communities by the kinds of tax incentives that state and local governments often offer—Edmund L. Andrews, *Stanford News*, Nov. 16, 2022:

https://news.stanford.edu/2022/11/16/solar-panels-largely-confined-wealthy-americans/review/?utm_medium=email

Veterans Bring Unique Skills to Solar Construction

While staffing shortages have impacted the construction industry for decades and worsened in recent years, large-scale solar EPC contractors like McCarthy Building Companies have found success recruiting U.S. military veterans who, in turn, are streamlining solar installation and construction processes by creating efficiencies through logistics—Scott Canada, *Solar Power World*, Nov. 9, 2022:

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2022/11/veterans-bring-unique-skills-to-solar-construction/>

Solar Technician Training Courses Available to Amazon Employees

StrataTech Education Group, an organization training people in craft trades, launched a new solar technician course for Amazon's hourly employees as part of Amazon's Career Choice program. The 10-week solar technician course is offered at The Refrigeration School (RSI) and teaches photovoltaic science and an introduction to the fundamentals of solar energy, with pre-paid tuition provided by Amazon—Billy Ludt, *Solar Power World*, Nov. 15, 2022:

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2022/11/solar-technician-training-courses-available-to-amazon-employees/>

Wealthy Communities have Microgrids. Now Tiny House Communities Want Them, Too

The fast-growing tiny house movement wants its own microgrids and is seeking to create standards for microgrids in tiny home communities. But, like other homeowners today, tiny home enthusiasts seek resilience, sustainability, lower cost energy and energy sharing among residents—Lisa Cohn, *Microgrid Knowledge*, Nov. 18, 2022: <https://www.microgridknowledge.com/community-microgrids/article/21438079/microgrid-standards-sought-by-tiny-house-community-stakeholders>

Agrivoltaics

Agrivoltaic Solar Tracker Uses Cables Instead of Buried Steel

Rute Foundation Systems, founded in Oregon in 2015, specializes in modular foundations for renewable energy. But in 2021, it focused its sites above ground, designing the patent-pending Suntracker for high-clearance solar installations like agrivoltaics. The Suntracker system is suspended by cables, rather than mounted on steel driven into the ground, providing what the company says is the lowest levelized cost of energy (LCOE) for high-clearance solar. Rute reports that by using cables rather than steel foundations, steel use is reduced by as much as 30 percent—Anne Fischer, *pv magazine*, Nov. 9, 2022:

<https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/11/09/agrivoltaic-solar-tracker-uses-cables-instead-of-buried-steel/>

Solar Panel Recycling

Why the Feared Wave of Solar Panel Waste May Be Smaller and Arrive Later Than We Expected

“Don’t panic,” said Heather Mirletz at the Colorado School of Mines, lead author of a recent paper that challenges several assumptions about what could happen when today’s generation of solar panels near retirement age. She has some encouraging news for anyone deeply concerned, or even mildly agitated, about how the world is going to deal with solar panel waste. [The paper](#) argues that the panels will last longer than earlier estimates, and that solar farm operators should prioritize keeping panels in the field for as long as possible—Dan Gearino, *Inside Climate News*, Nov. 3, 2022:

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/03112022/why-the-feared-wave-of-solar-panel-waste-may-be-smaller-and-arrive-later-than-we-expected/#:~:text=The%20paper%E2%80%99s%20findings%20also%20show%20that%20the%20wave,operations%20and%20figure%20out%20ways%20to%20reduce%20costs.>

Reports

Berkeley Lab Report on U.S. Residential Solar Adoption Shows Shifting Income and Demographic Trends

The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory released the latest edition of its Residential Solar-Adopter Income and Demographic Trends report. The report is based on data from 2.8 million residential households across the country that have installed solar, covering about 86 percent of all U.S. residential PV systems—Brian Savage, *pv magazine*, Nov. 23, 2022: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/11/23/berkeley-lab-report-on-u-s-residential-solar-adoption-shows-shifting-income-and-demographic-trends/>

Conferences and Events

Solar plus Storage for Resilient Communities for Washington State

The Solar plus Storage for Resilient Communities program funds solar and battery back-up power so community buildings can provide essential services when the power goes out. Grants support installation as well as planning work for solar plus storage systems at community buildings, including schools, community centers, libraries, and other buildings owned by local, state, and tribal governments and non-profits in Washington. Technical assistance opportunities help communities prepare to apply for future grant funding opportunities. Grants are tentatively expected to open in January. Commerce will hold two information and input sessions to share initial guidelines and seek input on the guidelines:

- December 8, 1:00 p.m.: General Session
- December 14, 2:00 p.m.: Session for Tribes

Learn more and register for the sessions on the program website:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/solar-plus-storage/>

Columbia Plateau Least-Conflict Solar Siting Project (Virtual Meeting), January 17, 2023

The Washington State University Energy Program will hold the second of three gatherings, January 17 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., in an effort to answer the question: Where can utility-scale solar be developed in the Columbia Plateau region while also ensuring that important natural habitat,

productive farmlands and ranchlands, and tribal rights and cultural resources are protected. All interested parties are invited to attend. For more information see:

<https://www.energy.wsu.edu/renewableenergy/LeastConflictSolar.aspx>

or contact Karen Janowitz at janowitzk@energy.wsu.edu

January ASES Webinar: Learn How to Write for Solar Today, January 25, 2023 1:00 p.m. PST

Do you want to learn more about how to craft opinion pieces for Solar Today? Learn this transferable skill that can amplify your voice and career by attending an upcoming webinar. Kat Friedrich, the editor in chief of Solar Today, will explain how knowledge, data and creativity can make your articles and pitches stand out. In today's crowded marketplace of ideas in the dynamic and changing solar industry, knowing how to express oneself well in writing can be a game-changer. For more information and to register: https://ases-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nyZXReUqSzeWWfRN9StzNw

Intersolar North America and Energy Storage North America Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, CA February 14-16, 2023

Intersolar North America (ISNA) and Energy Storage North America (ESNA), the industry's premier solar + storage event, announced the official theme for the 2023 conference program: "Climate Solutions Start Here: Solar + Storage Lead the Way. For more information: <https://www.intersolar.us/>

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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