February 3, 2022

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

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Oregon News

Ashland Approves Solar for New Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Oregon facility will now include solar power in the design, which could allow the plant to run for 178 days entirely on solar power and earn the city a net revenue of $24,000. Ashland, Ore., City Council has given a green light to solar possibilities at the new wastewater treatment plant as a means to improve the project's rating through Envision, a certification program for sustainable infrastructure projects—Allayana Darrow, *Governing*, January 7, 2022: https://www.governing.com/next/ashland-approves-solar-for-new-wastewater-treatment-plant

Energy Trust Introduces a Flat Incentive for Residential Solar Projects

Effective January 3, 2022, new solar incentive allocations opened for all customers, including new incentives for standard residential customers (starting at $1,200 for Portland General Electric and $900 for Pacific Power). Also, effective January 3, all standard residential projects receiving a flat incentive must have a total system size of at least 2 kW-DC. This new requirement will ensure that Energy Trust remains compliant with the above-market cost policy—Energy Trust of Oregon, *Inside*, January 18, 2022: https://insider.energytrust.org/energy-trust-introduces-a-flat-incentive-for-residential-solar-projects/?utm_source=Insider&utm_campaign=8d7afb9cd2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_06_07_00_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8ce97394fa-8d7afb9cd2-63146842

Commissioners OK Amended Lease for Solar Project

Another step forward was taken for a new solar energy project just outside of Enterprise on Wednesday, January 19, as the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners approved an amended lease

agreement for the project. The agreement is for a lease for Ryan Sheehy's Fleet Development to transform an unused 2.5-acre corner of the county's former asphalt plant site at Fish Hatchery Lane and Homan Lane into a solar power farm that would provide energy to local customers through Pacific Power's grid—Bill Bradshaw, *Wallowa County Chieftain*, January 25, 2022: https://www.wallowa.com/news/commissioners-ok-amended-lease-for-solar-project/article_abce8e56-7970-11ec-9e0a-a394e14304e9.html

Washington News

State Investments Enable Burst of New Solar Panel Projects in Community Buildings
The Washington State Department of Commerce today announced $3.5 million in grants to state and local government agencies to install solar panels at public buildings in communities throughout the state. The 29 projects will provide over 2.2 megawatts of solar and will produce more than 3 million kWh annually—enough to power about 280 homes—Washington State Dept. of Commerce [News Release], January 12, 2022: https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOC/bulletins/3049faf

Eastside Projects among State Grants for Solar Panels at Community Buildings
The Washington State Department of Commerce today announced $3.5 million in grants to state and local government agencies to install solar panels at public buildings throughout the state, including several on the Eastside. The 29 projects will provide more than 2.2 megawatts of solar and will produce more than 3 million kWh annually. That is enough to power about 280 homes, the Commerce Department said in a news release—John Sterns, *425 Business*, Jan. 13, 2022: https://www.425business.com/news/eastside-projects-among-state-grants-for-solar-panels-at-community-buildings/article_6ec8e64c-74c4-11ec-86a0-a7698085334e.html

Solar Panels to Reduce Energy Bills for Merritt Manor Tenants
Residents of Merritt Manor in Olympia should soon see their energy bills drop by about $250 per year. That's because the roof of this low-income apartment building on Martin Way was recently outfitted with 324 solar panels, which are expected to provide about one third of the building's total energy—Brandon Block, *The Olympian*, January 21, 2022: https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article257461488.html

PUD Receives Grant to Install 250-Plus Solar Panels
The Jefferson County Public Utility District will receive $100,000 to use for the installation of solar panels at public buildings in communities, such as hospitals, community centers, wastewater treatment plants, and schools. The money is coming from the Washington State Department of Commerce. The agency announced multiple recipients of the department's $3.5 million solar panel grants last week, including the Jefferson County PUD. The utility district will use the grant funding to install 266 solar panels on top of its main facility on Four Corners Road. The solar array will provide 100 kilowatts of power once installed—James Sloan, *The Leader*, January 25, 2022: https://www.ptleader.com/stories/pud-receives-grant-to-install-250-plus-solar-panels,79866

Two Washington Bills, Two Different Approaches to Renewable Energy Projects
Two bills with opposite approaches in the Washington State Legislature hope to change how some

renewable energy projects get approved. Now, the Washington's Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council reviews large-scale energy development in the state. After public hearings, it sends a recommendation to the governor, who approves or denies the project—Courtney Flatt, KUOW/NPR, January 26, 2022: https://www.kuow.org/stories/two-washington-bills-two-different-approaches-to-renewable-energy-projects

Bill would Pause New Washington Wind and Solar Farms
Washington State needs to look at the imbalance in where wind farms are based in the state and where the electricity is used, says a Walla Walla lawmaker. Republican Rep. Mark Klicker has introduced a bill in the Washington State Legislature that could delay state decisions on new or expanded alternative energy projects, including the proposed Horse Heaven Wind Farm by the Tri-Cities, while solutions to the perceived inequity are investigated—Annette Cary (*Tri-City Herald*) republished in *The Chronicle*, January 25, 2022: https://www.chronline.com/stories/bill-would-pause-new-washington-wind-and-solar-farms,283253

Possible Return: Warnick Bill Aims to Help REC Start Up Again
Legislation proposed by Sen. Judy Warnick, R-Moses Lake, and currently being considered by the Washington State Senate Committee on Business, Financial Services and Trade, could make it possible for REC Silicon's Moses Lake plant to resume production. Senate Bill 5849 would extend a targeted 43 percent business and occupation tax cut for manufacturers of solar panels and components another five years past the original expiration date of 2027 to 2032—Charles H. Featherstone, *Columbia Basin Herald*, January 27, 2022: https://columbiabasinherald.com/news/2022/jan/27/possible-return-warnick-bill-aims-help-rec-start-a/

A Cloudy Outlook for Coexisting with Solar Energy
Washington's farmland and natural habitat are not immune to climate change. Extreme weather, drought, wildfire and flooding impact our landscape and natural resources. Solar energy is essential to mitigating the impacts of climate change, but it is critically important to minimize the impact on our landscape—Dani Madronne and Adam Maxwell, *Union Bulletin*, January 28, 2022: https://www.union-bulletin.com/seattle_times/a-sunny-outlook-for-coexisting-with-solar-energy/article_9231d928-e5b8-5862-876b-6af5b0cf53d0.html

Solar Energy: Siting it Right in the Columbia Basin: A Balanced Approach to 100 Clean Electricity
In 2019, Audubon Washington helped pass the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) and concluded our six-year songbird monitoring program in the Sagebrush Sea. Since then we have been looking to leverage our science to protect this important habitat as our state builds the solar energy needed to reach 100 percent clean electricity—Audubon Washington, *Pacific Flyway*, [Updated December 2021]: https://wa.audubon.org/conservation/solar-energy-siting-it-right-columbia-basin

Grant to Install Solar at PUD
The funding sun is shining these days on the Jefferson County Public Utilities District. The PUD's new operations center at 310 Four Corners Road will have 266 solar panels affixed to its roof thanks to a $100,000 state Department of Commerce grant, PUD communications director Will O'Donnell said—Daine Urbani de la Paz, *Peninsula Daily News*, Jan. 28, 2022:

https://www.peninsuladailynews.com/news/grant-to-install-solar-at-pud/

New Solar Farm Planned as Tri-Cities Officials Back Bill to Halt Energy Projects
A state bill that would temporarily stop state approval of wind and solar energy projects got the backing of Benton, Yakima and Klickitat county officials at a public hearing of a legislative committee last week. The hearing comes as an application for a huge wind farm along the top of the Horse Heaven Hills south of Kennewick is being considered by the state agency and several companies are interested in developing solar projects in Benton County, according to officials there—Annette Cary, *Tri-City Herald*, January 28, 2022: https://www.wenatcheeworld.com/business/new-solar-farm-planned-as-tri-cities-officials-back-bill-to-halt-energy-projects/article_e108bddc-c0ad-58e7-913c-bac4633fbbb9.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Kent Church Receives $102,000 PSE Grant to Install Solar Panels
Kent United Methodist Church will receive a $102,135 grant from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to install a solar panel system to reduce energy costs and electricity emissions. Auburn-based MAD Energy NW hopes to begin construction in late March or early April and finish in May, according to church spokeswoman Pat Gray. The church is at 11010 SE 248th St.—Steve Hunter, *Kent Reporter*, January 31, 2022: https://www.kentreporter.com/news/kent-church-receives-102000-pse-grant-to-install-solar-panels/

National News

U.S. DOE Releases a Guide to Increasing Solar Energy Use in Communities
The U.S. Department of Energy today released the third edition of Solar Power in Your Community, a guidebook to help local governments unlock environmental and economic benefits of increased solar deployment. This third edition contains nearly 40 case studies from around the U.S. that show field-tested approaches to reducing solar market barriers. Also highlighted are new technologies and strategies to maximize the benefits of solar, such as combining solar with energy storage to improve resilience—Anne Fischer, *pv magazine*, January 19, 2022: https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/01/19/doe-releases-a-guide-to-increasing-solar-energy-use-in-communities/

U.S. DOE Announces New Initiatives and Growing Support to Rapidly Increase Community Solar Deployment
At today's National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP) Annual Summit, the U.S. Department of Energy announced several new initiatives to unlock barriers to the deployment of community solar. Together, these initiatives will help achieve the NCSP's target to enable community solar to power the equivalent of 5 million households and create $1 billion in energy bill savings by 2025—DOE, Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, *Bulletin*, Jan. 25, 2022:
https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEERE/bulletins/3077c96

Agrivoltaics

Growing Plants—and Providing Solar Energy
Food is one of our most basic needs. As the population of the world grows, we are going to need to grow more of it within the same amount of space. The United Nations estimates the world's population

will grow by 2 billion people between now and 2050. Access to fresh food is already a problem in many countries, and will likely get worse with more mouths to feed. This is where the concept of agrivoltaics could create a massive change. Listen to (8:49 minutes), or read transcript—Segment guest Chad Higgins, *Science Friday*, January 21, 2022: https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/growing-plants-and-providing-solar-energy/#segment-transcript

Reports

Superstores can Meet Half their Electricity Needs with Rooftop Solar, says a New Report
Expansive, flat and abundant, the rooftops of big-box stores in the United States could produce enough solar energy to meet half their electricity needs, according to a report released Thursday. Walmart leads the way in rooftop solar potential, followed by Target and Home Depot. "There's massive potential across the entire country for big-box stores to produce solar," said Wade Wilson, an author of the report from the nonprofit Environment America Research and Policy Center and the nonpartisan research organization Frontier Group—Tik Root, *The Washington Post*, January 20, 2022: https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2022/01/20/superstores-can-meet-half-their-electricity-needs-with-rooftop-solar-says-new-report/

Inside Clean Energy: As Efficiency Rises, Solar Power Needs Fewer Acres to Pack the Same Punch
Utility-scale solar power today is much more efficient than it was a decade ago in how much land it uses, according to new research by lead author Mark Bolinger of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. It is timely because utility-scale solar is a big part of plans to make a transition to carbon-free electricity, and because there have been few recent studies about solar efficiency in land use—Dan Gearino, *Inside Climate News*, January 27, 2022: https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27012022/inside-clean-energy-solar-power-efficiency/

Conferences and Webinars

Heating Up: Advances in Concentrating Solar-Thermal Power: Webinar February 10, 12:00 p.m. PT
Join the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) for a stakeholder webinar on the latest advances in concentrating solar-thermal power (CSP). SETO leadership will be joined by guest speaker Chiranjeev Kalra, Vice President of Power Generation Engineering at Heliogen, to highlight developments in reliability testing and commercialization of next-generation CSP technology. The webinar will also cover the broader scope of CSP research, development, and demonstration work in SETO's portfolio, which advances U.S. DOE goals in renewable power, long duration energy storage, and industrial decarbonization, as well as the latest updates from across SETO To register: https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/webinar-heating-advances-concentrating-solar-thermal-power

ASES February Webinar: Young Professionals Exploring Clean Energy Careers and Internships February 22, 2022 12:00 p.m. PT
Welcome to ASES's first career expo webinar event. All young professionals looking to learn more about different careers in the clean energy industry and opportunities as interns and mentees are welcome. ASES will feature panelists from solar architecture, energy labs, utilities, solar non-profits, renewable energy governmental work, and energy engineers. Learn about the journey and opportunities available to you as newcomers to the industry. Each panelist will present for 8-10 minutes, and end the webinar

with plenty of time for Q&A and speak to opportunities available.—For more information and to register: https://asesorg.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_E7QS5GrsQ_KABak2nKOkWg

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