January 13, 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

Sustainable Buildings Offer Lessons to Students in Green Technology

These days, books and iPads provide students with most of what they need to know upon entering the classroom. But for some students in Central Oregon, it is also the classrooms themselves that are helping them learn—Michael Kohn, *The Bulletin*, Dec. 9, 2021: https://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/environment/sustainable-buildings-offer-lessons-to-students-in-green-technology/article_c3737b92-57c5-11ec-88ba-77a7d734ef64.html

Standard Solar Acquires 10 MW Community Solar Portfolio in Oregon

Standard Solar announced the acquisition of three community solar projects with a total capacity of 10 MW in Oregon. Once the projects are completed, residents and businesses in the Portland General Electric (PGE) and Pacific Power service territories will be able to offset their electricity bills with solar energy contracts. The community solar program offers a 10 percent savings to low-to-moderate income (LMI) subscribers—Anne Fischer, *pv magazine*, Dec. 14, 2021: https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2021/12/14/standard-solar-acquires-10-mw-community-solar-portfolio-in-oregon/

Efforts to 'Solarize Corvallis' Lands its First Local Business, Block 15

Solarize Corvallis, a joint project of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and the Oregon Clean Power Cooperative, is finishing up its sixth roof panels project. Block 15 Brewery & Taproom's location on Southwest Deschutes Street is the first business to add rooftop solar panels in a Solarize Corvallis project. The previous five recipients have been the Corvallis School District, the Old Mill Center and the Benton County Kalapuya Building in 2020, with Corvallis High School and the First United Methodist Church also adding panels this year—Jim Day, *Albany Democrat-Herald*, Dec. 23, 2021:

https://democratherald.com/news/local/efforts-to-solarize-corvallis-lands-its-first-local-business-block-15/article_34c07f6b-0695-56d6-aa0b-569d98afe335.html

Obsidian Solar Decision Delayed
A decision by an administrative law judge in the contested Obsidian Solar case has been delayed from Tuesday, Dec. 14 to at minimum Monday, Jan. 3. The administrative law judge hearing the case had set a schedule of when he would issue a proposed project order for the proposed Obsidian Solar Facility in the Fort Rock area. The project would build a 400 megawatt solar facility on 3,921 acres—Kevin Winter, *Lake County Examiner*, Dec. 27, 2021: https://www.lakecountyexam.com/townnews/law/obsidian-solar-decision-delayed/article_955cbf7c-a7e3-5224-b57a-36bcb5f7ecbf.html

Washington News

How Climate Concerns and Incentives are Driving Solar Installations on Washington Roofs
When Erin Bryn Fetridge and Ron Darling decided to put 20 solar panels on their roof this fall, one key motivator drove the decision. “We want to have less of a footprint on the planet,” Fetridge said. “It probably sounds cheesy, but it’s the truth of it”. The Seattle couple is part of a growing movement in Washington to embrace solar — despite the Pacific Northwest’s reputation for chronically overcast skies. Residents in the state installed an estimated 38.6 megawatts (MW) of solar power this year alone, a more than 10-fold increase over a decade ago, according to an industry nonprofit. The total residential solar statewide is about 213 MW—Lisa Stiffler, *Geekwire*, Dec. 18, 2021: https://www.geekwire.com/2021/how-climate-concerns-and-incentives-are-driving-solar-installations-on-washington-roofs/

WDFW Warns Solar Farm could be Lights Out for State's Main Sage Grouse Population
If built, a 2,390-acre solar farm on Badger Mountain in north-central Washington could finish off the state's greater sage grouse population, the Department of Fish and Wildlife warns. The mountain, near East Wenatchee and about 100 miles east of Seattle, is in Douglas County, the grouse's "last stronghold" in the state, according to Fish and Wildlife regional director Brock Hoenes—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Dec. 20, 2021: https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/rurallife/wdfw-warns-solar-farm-could-be-lights-out-for-states-main-sage-grouse-population/article_87913f2c-61db-11ec-a54c-0f6d67aaf38f.html#:~:text=If%20built%2C%20a%202%2C390-acre%20solar%20farm%20on%20Badger,population%2C%20the%20Department%20of%20Fish%20and%20Wildlife%20warns.

Inslee Approves New Solar Project Near Moxee with Work Expected to Start Next Year
The governor has approved a solar project near Moxee. Gov. Jay Inslee on Monday signed a site certification agreement for the Goose Prairie solar project, clearing the way for Seattle-based OneEnergy Renewables to build the 80 megawatt project on 625 acres about 8 miles east of Moxee—*Yakima Herald-Republic*, Dec. 23, 2021: https://www.yakimaherald.com/news/local/inslee-approves-new-solar-project-near-moxee-with-work-expected-to-start-next-year/article_ce139ff1-638d-5465-940a-9f36d2a2a84e.html

Solar Project OK'd Over Yakima Farm Bureau's Protest
Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has approved a 625-acre solar project that will be built on agricultural land

and was opposed by the Yakima County Farm Bureau. Inslee, adopting the recommendation of the Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council, has signed off on the Goose Prairie Solar project eight miles east of Moxee—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Dec. 27, 2021: https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/rurallife/solar-project-okd-over-yakima-farm-bureaus-protest/article_4819367a-6423-11ec-8c5c-6b572b9da0d9.html

Washington Looks to Re-Establish Rooftop Solar Incentive Program

From 2017 to 2018, Washington State ran a rooftop solar incentive program which provided $110 million to customers who completed residential and commercial solar energy installations, leading to the installation of nearly 7,500 residential energy systems, 380 commercial energy systems, and more than 100 MW of solar capacity. Three years after that phasing, Washington Senator Jeff Wilson looks to re-establish that solar incentive program by introducing Senate Bill 5493 in the state's upcoming legislative session—Tim Sylvia, pv magazine, Dec. 27, 2021: https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2021/12/27/washington-looks-to-re-establish-rooftop-solar-incentive-program/

State Sen. Jeff Wilson's Bill would Relaunch Solar Energy Incentives for Homes

A bill introduced by Sen. Jeff Wilson for the upcoming legislative session would bring back a popular incentive program for homeowners to install solar panels. Senate Bill 5493 reinstates the renewable energy system incentive program that began in 2017 and provided $110 million to residential and commercial solar energy installations. The new version of the program proposed by Wilson keeps the funding total, but focuses more heavily on encouraging homeowners to install their own solar systems—Brennan Kaufman, *The Chronicle*, Dec. 28, 2021: https://www.chronline.com/stories/state-sen-jeff-wilsons-bill-would-relaunch-solar-energy-incentives-for-homes,281484

Solar Company Rejects WDFW's Suggestions on Fencing

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's ideas for keeping a solar project in Klickitat County from blocking animals are impractical, according to an energy developer. Avangrid Renewables, the U.S. subsidiary of Iberdrola Group, a Spanish utility company, proposes to fence 670 acres of rangeland for the 100-megawatt Bluebird solar project 26 miles east of Goldendale—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Jan. 5, 2022: https://www.capitalpress.com/ag_sectors/rurallife/solar-company-rejects-wdfws-suggestions-on-fencing/article_47107c38-6dac-11ec-92e1-376e24fd1333.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

The Long Wait for Community Solar in Washington State — Episode 147 of Local Energy Rules

In the state of Washington, advocates hope that the third time is the charm for passing community solar legislation. For this episode of the Local Energy Rules Podcast, host John Farrell speaks with Mason Rolph, President of Olympia Community Solar. In the absence of supportive state policy, Rolph has found a way to develop community solar gardens that reward subscribers. Farrell and Rolph discuss Olympia Community Solar, the organization's advocacy work, and why Washington needs a proper community solar program—Maria McCoy, *Institute for Local Self-Reliance*, Jan. 5, 2022:

https://ilsr.org/olympia-community-solar-wa-ler147/

Washington Renewable Energy Advocates Support Community Solar Incentive Bill
Washington Representatives Sharon Shewmake and Liz Berry introduced legislation that aims to amend the state's existing Production Incentive Program for renewable energy projects and and establish a new Community Solar Expansion Program. The legislation, House Bill 1814, plans to expand the opportunities for low-income residents to access renewable energy through an increased focus on installing community solar projects in the state—Tim Sylvia, *pv magazine*, Jan. 10, 2022: https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2022/01/10/washington-renewable-energy-advocates-support-community-solar-incentive-bill/

Regional and National News

Energy Justice and Local Solar Go Hand-in-Hand
Local energy resources have the potential to equitably distribute the benefits of clean energy in a way that provides jobs, resilience and savings to communities left out of our century-old electricity grid. These resources – like rooftop and community solar, and battery storage – have demonstrated this potential and are the most affordable solution in the transition to a clean energy future. That is the unequivocal finding of a new, state-of-the-art utility roadmapping study, commissioned by Local Solar for All and conducted by Vibrant Clean Energy—Odette Mucha (Vote Solar) and Luis Nasvytis Torres (Earthjustice), *Renewable Energy World*, Dec. 10, 2021: https://www.renewableenergyworld.com/solar/energy-justice-and-local-solar-go-hand-in-hand/

2022 Taxes: Solar Power and the Federal Tax Credit
Daily headlines remind us of how unreliable and vulnerable our traditional power grids are, which is why more and more accountants are exploring the possible taxpayer savings of solar power for their clients—Jason Waller, *CPA Practice Advisor*, Dec. 15, 2021: https://www.cpapracticeadvisor.com/tax-compliance/article/21250349/2022-taxes-solar-power-and-the-federal-tax-credit

How to Turn our Energy Future from a Dystopian Nightmare to a Sustainable Solution
The Biden administration inherits the interconnected climate and biodiversity crises from predecessors of both political parties, and now is embarking on an ambitious, multi-faceted campaign to find solutions. The stalled Build Back Better Act, representing the administration's priorities, places heavy emphasis on promoting and subsidizing utility-scale renewable energy projects on public lands, while largely missing out on the opportunity to focus on distributed renewable solutions sited in urban and/or already developed areas to avoid environmental impacts and preserve public lands—Erik Molvar, *The Hill*, Dec. 27, 2021: https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/587222-how-to-turn-our-energy-future-from-a-dystopian-nightmare-to-a#bottom-story-socials

Agrivoltaics

Solar and Crop Production Research shows 'Multi-Solving' Climate Benefits
Stabilizing the climate demands a rapid transition to 100 percent carbon-free power, which will require large increases in solar power generation. In the U.S., the Biden administration has outlined a plan to power 40 percent of the U.S. power grid with solar energy by 2035. But new studies point to the

multiple benefits of combining solar electricity generation with agricultural production. From water conservation to food production, habitat restoration, and local economic development, the research demonstrates that the "multi-solving" power of agrivoltaics (combining solar in concert with other agricultural land uses) can increase public support for solar development, offering an opportunity to avoid or resolve conflicts—Martín Bonzi and Sarah Sengeman, *Yale Climate Solutions*, Dec. 1, 2021: https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2021/12/solar-and-crop-production-research-shows-multi-solving-climate-benefits/

Your Rooftop Garden Could Be a Solar-Powered Working Farm
Long the territory of cats, weather vanes, and the occasional fiddler, roofs are growing thick with solar panels. A home or business rooftop is an ideal place to site them because sunlight there is less obstructed by shadows and rooftops are generally unutilized spaces—it is better for the environment to add panels to an existing structure than to clear new land for a solar farm. But even panel-covered rooftops may not be as well-utilized as they could be. A new scientific field known as rooftop agrivoltaics asks: What if we also grew crops under them? These would not be ordinary green roofs, which are typically small gardens, but rather working farms—Matt Simon, *Wired*, Dec. 3, 2021: https://www.wired.com/story/your-rooftop-garden-could-be-a-solar-powered-working-farm/

Reports

Knock Knock, It's the Solar Influencer Next Door
Solar leads and installations in disadvantaged communities do not come from phone calls or emails from solar companies but instead from referrals by friends nearby, finds new research by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) on California income-qualified solar programs. This research is part of the multiyear Solar Energy Evolution and Diffusion Studies funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office. In this study, NREL used California data and predictive models to determine the likelihood of solar referral and adoption among low- to moderate-income households—generally defined as a family of four making less than 80 percent of the median family income for their area. The findings, published in an Energy Research & Social Science article, can help identify successful solar uptake strategies for communities that have been left out of the industry to date—*NREL News*, Dec. 9, 2021: https://www.nrel.gov/news/program/2021/knock-knock-its-the-solar-influencer-next-door.html

Conferences, Events and Webinars

Olympia Community Solar 2022 Annual Meeting (Zoom) Jan. 16, 2022 1:00 p.m. PST
Join the Olympia Community Solar team for its second annual meeting. This is the perfect opportunity to learn firsthand about the incredible year that they have had and to provide input on what direction to head in next. For more information and to register: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/olympia-community-solar-annual-meeting-2022-tickets-222426231847?fbclid=IwAR0APAjxbcD1CdFg5M_izcXQkrymDdiZvN9SLEPcshfmdgUl_EoFHH2_U_0&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=199969167&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--N6SOJUjaexJniq0U3N4cW73NuXn_LeZA5CvWNg4w1dCzxdZLoGkKGsNQw3zOEzpz5XEtxQ4l639i_Rgyb2F8r8ouLiA&utm_content=199969167&utm_source=hs_email

U.S. C3E Women in Clean Energy webinar series: Maximizing Your Impact in the Clean Energy: Jan. 20, 2022 10:00 a.m. PST
The session will focus on the diverse career opportunities in the clean energy sector. The webinar will be followed by an optional networking event with the presenters, who will answer questions about clean energy career paths and options—For more information and to register: https://energy.mit.edu/event/u-s-c3e-women-in-clean-energy-webinar-series-maximizing-your-impact-in-the-clean-energy-transition/

Solar Lessons from Pendleton, OR (Zoom) Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022 6:00 p.m. PST
Pendleton, OR is a small city that packs a big punch when it comes to solar and energy efficiency. Learn more about how the city is leading OR to a clean Energy Future. Guest: Bob Patterson, Pendleton Public Works Director. Presented by: Solar Oregon and the Energy Trust of Or. For more information and to register: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/solar-lessons-from-pendleton-oregon-tickets-224902809357#listing-organizer

Solar Power and Storage Mountain West (Conference) Denver, CO Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2022
COSSA's annual conference is the premier Mountain West conference that attracts professionals from across the country. The conference features knowledgeable industry speakers, interactive panel discussions, training sessions, special networking opportunities with solar and energy storage leaders, and an extensive expo hall featuring leading companies and the latest technologies. For more information and to register: http://solarstoragemountainwest.com/

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