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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

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Oregon News

Albany Solar Farm Approved, With Conditions

The Linn County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday approved an application for a 12-acre solar farm just outside of Albany. It placed a key condition on the approval — the applicants must secure an independent wetlands analysis of the land before any ground breaks. The decision comes after months of back and forth between officials and neighbors of the project. Neighbors opposed the project on numerous grounds but the one that seemed to resonate most with commissioners was potential environmental impacts—Troy Shinn, *Corvallis Gazette Times*, June 10, 2021:

https://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/albany-solar-farm-approved-with-conditions/article_456f72c4-740d-588b-bf38-5e8b62fba678.html

Kôr Community Land Trust Invites Public to Ribbon-Cutting on First Development

Kôr Community Land Trust invites the public to attend the ribbon cutting of its first development, Kôrazón, on Tuesday, July 13 at noon. The brief, outdoor event will celebrate the opening of Kôr's net-zero, affordable homeownership development at 21221 Hurita Place in Bend. Located in the Larkspur neighborhood off of SE 27th Street, these 2-bedroom, 2-bath, 1,100-square-foot homes are designed to net-zero energy standards and feature solar panels, an energy-efficient building envelope, lighting and mechanicals—News Channel 21 KTVA, June 18, 2021: <https://ktvz.com/news/2021/06/18/kor-community-land-trust-invites-public-to-ribbon-cutting-on-first-development/>

Oregon Allocates \$10 Million to Solar + Storage Rebate Program

During the final week of Oregon's legislative session, HB 5006, the omnibus spending bill, has allocated \$10 million to the Oregon Department of Energy for [Solar + Storage Rebates](#). This is five-times the

amount the program was originally awarded in 2019. The program serves residential customers, low and moderate income customers and low-income service providers. “This decision represents a strong step forward in OSSIA’s mission to expand solar markets and make solar accessible for all,” said Angela Crowely-Koch, executive director of the Oregon Solar + Storage Industries Association (OSSIA)—Kelsey Misbrener, *Solar Power World*, June 29, 2021:

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2021/06/oregon-10-million-added-to-solar-storage-rebate-program/>

Small-Scale Community Solar Installation Incentives

Energy Trust is now accepting applications for custom incentive requests to support small-scale Community Solar projects (<360 kWAC) benefitting underserved customers. Project Managers registered with the Oregon Community Solar Program should submit applications for eligible projects by July 16, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. (PT). When the application window closes, solar program staff will conduct an eligibility and above-market cost screening for each project. For more information and to download application materials, see the Energy Trust of Oregon: <https://www.energytrust.org/community-solar/>

Washington News

REC Silicon Hopes to Restart Production in Moses Lake in 2023

REC Silicon believes it can restart its shuttered Moses Lake production facility sometime in 2023. Speaking during an online presentation Tuesday outlining the company's earnings for the first quarter of 2021, CEO and President Tore Torvund said demand for solar-grade silicon is strong and alternative customers – such as battery makers and U.S.-based solar panel manufacturers – are beginning to emerge. "We plan to restart Moses Lake in 2023," Torvund said. "We are confident we can put together a portfolio that will allow a restart in 2023" —Charles H. Featherston, *Columbia Basin Herald*, May 14, 2021: <https://columbiabasinherald.com/news/2021/may/14/rec-silicon-hopes-restart-production-moses-lake-20/>

Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings – Solar Grants Program now Accepting Applications for New Round of Funding

The Washington State Department of Commerce is now accepting applications for a competitive grant with up to \$3,465,810 available through the Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings – Solar Grants Program. Solar Grants provide competitive funding to install solar at existing public buildings and facilities such as schools, hospitals, civic buildings and wastewater treatment plants. Funded projects cut energy costs, reduce pollution and showcase solar in communities across the state. For the first time, these grants are now available to federally-recognized Tribal governments, in addition to other local governments and state agencies. For more information and application documents see: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/solar-grants/>

Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council Makes a Decision on the Goose Prairie Solar Facility Project

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council completed its environmental review of the proposed Goose Prairie Solar Facility solar project in Yakima County and found that the proposed project would not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. One Energy Renewables plans to build the 80 megawatt (MW) Goose Prairie Solar Facility with an optional battery energy storage system capable of storing up to 80 MW of energy near the city of Moxee—NBC KNDO 23, June 25, 2021:

https://www.nbcrightnow.com/news/energy-facility-site-evaluation-council-makes-a-decision-on-the-goose-prairie-solar-facility-project/article_1e9fd854-d60b-11eb-bb94-8b169344389d.html

HopeSource Hosting Grand Opening for Spurling Court Affordable Housing Project

Moving vans and U-Haul trucks were coming in as construction crews moved to put the finishing touches on Ellensburg's newest 49-unit affordable housing project at 1204 Rainier Street. The affordable housing complex is topped with a 101-kilowatt solar array. The power generated by the panels will offset the energy costs of the Spurling Court community center, with additional utility savings shared among residents of the complex—Rodney Harwod, *Daily Record*, May 31, 2021:

https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/monday/local_news/hopesource-hosting-grand-opening-for-spurling-court-affordable-housing-project/article_832bb5c3-df30-550b-a87f-a13d898e7517.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Agrivoltaics

Largest Agrivoltaic Research Project in U.S. Advances Renewable Energy While Empowering Local Farmers

The global installed capacity of agrivoltaics, or the co-development of the same area of land for both solar power and agriculture, has grown rapidly from about 5 MW in 2012 to approximately 2,900 MW in 2020. One of the largest driving factors for this growth is the need to continue to build solar projects to mitigate climate change in the face of dwindling available non-agricultural land. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), by 2030, utility-scale solar could cover almost 2 million acres of land in the United States. A recent Oregon State University study also estimates that converting just 1 percent of American farmland to agrivoltaics would not only meet the nation's renewable energy targets, but also save water and create a sustainable, long-term food system—

Solar Power World, June 10, 2021: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2021/06/largest-agrivoltaic-research-project-in-u-s-advances-renewable-energy-while-empowering-local-farmers/>

Computational Model for Agrivoltaics

A U.S. scientist has developed a computational framework that assesses how well a hypothetical agrivoltaic project would perform in achieving desired outcomes such as the volume of PV electricity produced, and energy-to-agriculture. The method considers the high-frequency decomposition of solar irradiance into multiple rays and analyzes how these rays are propagated forward in time, to assess multiple reflections and absorption for various system configurations. It also takes into account panel inclination, panel refractive indices, sizes, shapes, heights, and albedo—Emiliano Bellini, *PV Magazine*, June 8, 2021: <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2021/06/08/computational-model-for-agrivoltaics/>

Can Solar Farms Help Save Bees?

The solar boom is here. According to the Solar Energy Industry Association, solar energy prices have fallen over 70 percent in the past decade. New solar installations have grown almost exponentially in that time, and they are going to have to keep growing even faster to meet climate goals. But all of that growth is going to take up a lot of space. Princeton University's Net Zero America study estimated that the area taken up by ground-mounted solar panels in the United States will have to increase by nine million acres by 2050 to reach carbon neutrality. And that means that what is going in with the land underneath the panels, which solar companies typically have not given much thought to, is starting to

get more attention—Brianna Barbu, *Discover*, June 26, 2021:

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/environment/can-solar-farms-help-save-bees>

Solar Industry News and Innovations

Solar Manufacturing Tax Credit Introduced in the U.S. Senate

Senator Jon Ossoff (D-Georgia) introduced a bill, dubbed the [Solar Energy Manufacturing for America Act](#), which looks to establish a tax credit for domestic solar manufacturers. According to the senator's office, the act would boost the U.S. solar supply chain to create American clean energy jobs, compete with offshore manufacturers, and support energy independence. The incentive would be available through 2028 with a phase-down taking place the two years following—Tim Sylvia, *pv magazine*, June 22, 2021: <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2021/06/22/solar-manufacturing-tax-credit-introduced-in-the-u-s-senate/>

Inside SolarAPP+ and NREL's Pursuit of Seamless Residential Solar Permitting

The hazy days of unknown delay times for home solar permitting, inspection and interconnection appear finally may be behind the industry now, thanks to the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus – SolarAPP+ -- software. Developed in conjunction with Underwriter Laboratories, SolarAPP+ automates the permitting process for residential solar systems. In broad tests across the country, it has reduced the time required to grant a permit from a national average of five business days to zero, and reduced soft cost overhangs from permitting, inspection and interconnection (PII)—Charles W. Thurston, *Solar Builder*, June, 3, 2021: <https://solarbuildermag.com/news/inside-solarapp-and-nrels-pursuit-of-seamless-residential-solar-permitting/>

Resource Recycling

How the Recycling Industry is Preparing to Tack Solar Panels

In some ways, solar panels present some of the same recycling challenges as old TVs. They carry a high cost to recycle properly, have limited commodity value and contain hazardous metals. At the same time, relatively few downstream processors recycle them, and markets are working against reuse. "Solar panels are pretty much the new CRT," said AJ Orben, vice president of Arizona-based We Recycle Solar, referring to cathode-ray tubes, which contain leaded glass and were used in old, bulky TVs—Jared Paben, *Resource Recycling*, June 15, 2021: <https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2021/06/15/how-the-recycling-industry-is-preparing-to-tackle-solar-panels/>

Recycling Next-Generation Solar Panels Fosters Green Planet

Tossing worn-out solar panels into landfills may soon become electronics waste history. Designing a recycling strategy for a new, forthcoming generation of photovoltaic solar cells – made from metal halide perovskites, a family of crystalline materials with structures like the natural mineral calcium titanate – will add a stronger dose of environmental friendliness to a green industry, according to Cornell University-led research published June 24 in *Nature Sustainability*. Read more and access abstract at Cornell University's *Newswise*, June 24, 2021:

<https://www.newswise.com/articles/recycling-next-generation-solar-panels-fosters-green-planet>

Upcoming Conferences, Webinars

WRISE Webinar Series: Equitable Access in Clean Energy – Policy Equity: July 13, 2021 12:00 p.m. PDT

Women of Renewable Industries and Sustainable Energy will be hosting a panel on how clean energy policy can be used as a tool for equity. In addition to other clean energy policy considerations such as community benefits agreements or a federal clean energy standard, policy that centers on economic inequality can promote and ensure equitable access. Panel speakers will discuss how clean energy policy can help build a more equitable energy future. For more information and to register:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6099801754416664587?source=Website>

Leadership Roundtable: Empowering Cities to Accelerate Rooftop Solar Installations Across America Webinar, July 15, 2021 10:00 a.m. PDT

Join the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm and mayors from across the country for the launch of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's Solar Automated Permit Processing (SolarAPP+) tool. SolarAPP+ makes it easy for local governments to permit residential solar project applications by reviewing projects for building code compliance and instantly approving the project. Guests will discuss how local governments are speeding up the permit process and reducing barriers for solar energy. For more information and to register:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEERE/bulletins/2e5438c>

The Bad River Band Microgrid: Solar+Storage as a Tool for Tribal Energy Sovereignty and Resilience: July 22, 2021 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. PDT

In July of 2016, historic floods inundated the lands of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Wisconsin and left the tribe without power and without critical services. In May of 2021, the Band flipped the switch on a 500-kilowatt solar array paired with more than 1,000 kilowatt-hours of battery storage. This microgrid starts their journey toward resilience and energy sovereignty. In this Clean Energy Group webinar, learn how the Band assembled the team necessary to successfully navigate the federal Department of Energy grant process, overcame obstacles created by COVID-19, and built the Ishkonige Nawadide Solar Microgrid Project—For more information and to register see Clean Energy States Alliance: <https://www.cesa.org/event/bad-river-band-microgrid/>

ASES SOLAR 2021: August 3-6, 2021 Boulder, CO

Welcome to Boulder, Colorado, and the American Solar Energy Society's 50th Annual National Solar Conference, SOLAR 2021: Empowering a Sustainable Future. The American Solar Energy Society is dedicated to helping America work toward the goal of a 100 percent renewable energy society—For more information and to register: <https://ases.org/conference/>

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