



September 2, 2021

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>

Oregon News

Here Comes the Sun... and Potential Power

A sustainable yet practical approach to development of a new agriculture complex at Chemeketa Community College has produced a building expected to have net-zero energy use. From the get-go, the project team had high sustainability goals: a mass-plywood structure, a natural air ventilation system and photovoltaic panels. Along the southern exterior of the complex runs a canopy that not only shades classrooms but also puts less pressure on the ventilation system. Instead of constructing a roof for the canopy and placing solar panels atop it, the project team opted to save some money and use the photovoltaic panels as the roof—Alex Jensen, *DJC Oregon*, August 5, 2021:

<https://dicoregon.com/news/2021/08/05/comes-sun-potential-power/>

Meals on Wheels People Debuts Electric-Solar Van, First of its Kind in the Nation

Meals on Wheels People has introduced a new vehicle into its fleet – an all-electric van with a refrigeration unit powered by solar energy. The van, the first of its kind in the nation, was funded by a grant from the Portland General Electric (PGE) Drive Change Fund and was built by Lightning eMotors of Loveland, Colorado. The Lightning Electric Transit Van is a zero-emission electric vehicle—Meals on Wheels People [Press release], August, 9, 2021: <https://www.mowp.org/2021/08/meals-on-wheels-people-debuts-electric-solar-van-first-of-its-kind-in-the-nation/>

Obsidian, ODOE Dismiss Petitioner Claims

In the contested Obsidian Solar Facility case in Fort Rock, both the Obsidian Solar Company and the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) submitted written testimony arguing against many of the conditions set down by the petitioners, with ODOE making a few minor amendments to its site

application for Obsidian to follow. Several property owners filed a contested case with the Office of Administrative Hearings for the Energy Facility Siting Council against the proposed Obsidian Solar Project. The proposed Obsidian Solar Project would build a 400 megawatt facility on 3,921 acres in the Fort Rock area of Lake County—Kevin Winter, *Lake County Examiner*, August, 11, 2021:

https://www.lakecountyexam.com/news/obsidian-odoe-dismiss-petitioner-claims/article_49f132de-fa12-11eb-92e7-57755c8a62f3.html

NLFR District #1 to Host Open House

Prior to the almost \$4 million dollar remodel that began in March of 2019, no part of the Bob Everest Station 14 had a sprinkler system. Rob Dahlman, Fire Chief for North Lincoln Fire & Rescue District #1, is a proponent of residents having sprinkler systems in their homes if at all possible, but there was not even a system at the fire house. Now, they not only have a sprinkler system, but also a security system, a generator, solar panels, an elevator, an energy efficient furnace system with air scrubbers and so much more—Amber Deyo, *The News Guard*, August 10, 2021:

https://www.thenewsguard.com/news/nlfr-district-1-to-host-open-house/article_239672d6-f92a-11eb-a6a1-7b791424f26b.html

With the Growth of Renewable Energy, the Need for Trained Workers is Surging

Renewable energy is the fastest-growing energy source in the United States, spiking 100% from 2000 to 2018 according to the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. This momentum sees no end; by 2050, solar generation as an electricity source is projected to jump from 11% to 48% of total U.S. renewable generation. Forbes reports that the renewable energy industry has evolved into a large employer of talent because of these trends. Already, nearly 3.3 million Americans work in clean energy, outnumbering fossil fuel workers by 3-to-1—James Hill, *Portland Business Journal*, August 13, 2021:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/portland/news/2021/08/13/with-the-growth-of-renewable-energy-the-need-for.html>

Solar Possibilities: Powering Your Home is Attainable + Affordable

Central Oregon is blessed with abundant sunshine and long sunny summer days. It is one of the many lures that bring people there to relax on vacation and inspire many to consider relocating. Driving around Bend and neighboring communities, it's become observable that more residents are installing solar photovoltaic systems on their roofs, taking advantage of the plentiful sun and converting it into electricity to power their homes and even cars—Abbie and Rick Sams, *Bend Source Weekly*, August 18, 2021: <https://www.bendsource.com/bend/solar-possibilities/Content?oid=15226843>

Can Oregon, Washington and British Columbia Learn to Share Renewable Power?

March of 2019 opened with a deep chill across Cascadia. Arctic air poured south, jacking up energy consumption and straining energy supplies in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. It conjured a “perfect” storm for the region’s electricity grid—Peter Fairley, OPB, August 25, 2021:

<https://www.opb.org/article/2021/08/25/investigatwest-can-west-learn-to-share-renewable-power>

Washington News

A Father and Son Complete a Solar-Electric Cruise to Alaska

Since 2004, David Borton and his son Alex have had a vision, to sell solar-electric boats and prove their

viability. Their recent trip to Alaska may have just provided proof of concept. This summer, the two men, who sell electric-powered boats under the brand name Solar Sal, completed what they believe to be the first-ever solar-electric boat voyage from Bellingham, Washington, to Juneau, Alaska. They used their solar-electric 27-foot model that was designed and built by stitch-and-glue guru Sam Devlin of Olympia, Washington, and propelled by a Torqeedo electric drive system—Pim Van Hemmen, *Soundings*, August 6, 2021: <https://www.soundingsonline.com/news/a-father-and-son-complete-a-solar-electric-cruise-to-alaska>

South End Students Lead Push to Install Solar Panels at Highline High School

Dozens of solar panels will eventually cover the roof of Highline High School's new building in Burien under a student-led plan to build the largest solar-power system ever at a South King County public school. Installation of the project would occur next year if the project meets its January 2022 fundraising deadline. Once complete, the 100-kilowatt solar array would not only produce clean electricity but also provide experiential, STEM-based learning opportunities for students, who could monitor the system's flow of energy in real time—Ben Adlin, *South Seattle Emerald*, August 16, 2021: <https://southseattleemerald.com/2021/08/16/south-end-students-lead-push-to-install-solar-panels-at-highline-high-school/>

Multi-Site Solar Project Moving Ahead in Kittitas Valley

Crews are at work throughout the Kittitas Valley making progress on a multiple-site solar project that has been the subject of much contention over past years with local residents. Seattle-based TUUSSO Energy was given approval by the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council in June to begin construction on the Columbia Solar Project. The project, originally planned for five sites spread out within the Kittitas Valley, has been reduced to three. In a monthly progress update provided to EFSEC on Tuesday, TUUSSO Energy CEO Owen Hurd said progress is moving along at a swift pace at all three sites within the valley—Karl Holappa, *Daily Record*, August 18, 2021: https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/multi-site-solar-project-moving-ahead-in-kittitas-valley/article_58eb4290-1e62-5a39-958b-00330dddc01e.html

Commerce Clean Energy Fund Awards Grants to 18 Innovative Electricity Grid Modernization Projects

The Washington State Department of Commerce today announced approximately \$3.9 million in grants from the state's Clean Energy Fund for 18 electricity grid modernization projects across the state. As Washington's utilities advance towards the state's goal of 100% clean electricity by 2045, the projects will advance a variety of renewable energy technologies and electricity system innovations. The list of awards includes a partnership with Yakama Power and grants to Avista and Snohomish County PUD that include partnerships with the Spokane Tribe of Indians and Tulalip Tribe, respectively benefitting Washington Communities—Washington State Department of Commerce [Press release], August 25, 2021: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/uncategorized/commerce-clean-energy-fund-awards-grants-to-18-innovative-electricity-grid-modernization-projects-benefitting-washington-communities/>

Building Houses, Breaking Barriers

Homeownership has long been a key to stability, community, and building wealth for families. It also presents impossibly high barriers for families starting with low to no wealth. Yakima Valley Partners Habitat for Humanity breaks down these barriers. A new solar installation supported by Spark

Northwest will be a step towards energy independence and community resilience while lowering operating costs and freeing more funding for housing—Spark Northwest [Email newsletter], August 26, 2021: <https://us6.campaign-archive.com/?u=e5468d34bdd76aa4b87675928&id=8b6f63d281>

Silfab Opens Second Solar Panel Assembly Facility in Washington State

Silfab Solar has announced the opening of its third solar panel assembly facility in North America. The new 400-MW capacity factory in Burlington, Washington is just 24 miles south of its sister factory in Bellingham, Washington. Silfab is headquartered and has its original factory outside Toronto, Ontario, Canada—Kelly Pickerel, *Solar Power World*, August 30, 2021:

<https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2021/08/silfab-opens-second-solar-panel-assembly-facility-in-washington-state/>

National News

DOE Awards \$45 Million to Advance Solar Manufacturing and Grid Technologies

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced \$45 million for projects that will help seamlessly integrate clean energy sources onto the grid, supporting the Biden Administration's goal of a decarbonized power sector by 2035. As solar and other renewable energy are rapidly deployed throughout the country, these projects are developing new technologies and capabilities to bolster the resilience of the U.S. electric grid. The funding, which also creates a new \$25 million consortium, will advance the domestic manufacturing of solar energy and electric grid technologies—U.S. Department of Energy, August 11, 2021: <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-awards-45-million-advance-solar-manufacturing-and-grid-technologies>

Biden Administration Reveals Possible Intent to Extend ITC in New Briefing

Today, President Biden and the U.S. Department of Energy released an Issue Brief on solar energy research, deployment and workforce priorities. The briefing mentions the possibility of extending the solar ITC to help reach Biden's clean energy goals. SEIA celebrated the brief for addressing a number of solar industry policy priorities. "The Biden administration's report today on solar energy shows that with the right policies in place, solar will help tackle the climate crisis, build a strong U.S. manufacturing sector and create hundreds of thousands of jobs," said Abigail Ross Hopper, president and CEO of SEIA, in a statement—Read more and access the brief: Solar Off-Grid, August 17, 2021: <https://solar-off-grid.com/2021/08/17/biden-administration-reveals-possible-intent-to-extend-itc-in-new-briefing/>

How Automated Permitting can Help Achieve SolSmart Designation

SolSmart has prepared a short flyer on how local governments can receive points toward designation by using an automated permitting process. Permitting and inspection is an area where local governments can have a major impact on the cost of going solar for residents and businesses. The new flyer provides some initial guidance for communities considering how automated permitting can help achieve SolSmart designation. It includes a table to show how an automated permitting process can assist with meeting SolSmart criteria. For more information and to access the flyer—SolSmart, August 18, 2021: <https://solsmart.org/news/how-automated-permitting-can-help-achieve-solsmart-designation/>

Solar Panels Offer Landfills Second Chance at a Useful Life

Owners of closed landfills have increasingly found ways to repurpose capped and closed sites, with one

new option also tying into America's quest to decrease its dependency on fossil fuels. The former Sunnyside landfill site in Houston may soon host a large-scale solar panel array on its property via a redevelopment project that seems to have largely been met with approval from residents and neighboring property owners—Brain Taylor, *Waste Today*, August 19, 2021:

<https://www.wastetodaymagazine.com/article/solar-panels-landfills/>

Reports

New Report: Building Local Resilience Through Solar

How can local governments integrate solar energy plans with their goals for community resilience? And how can they locate the financing to achieve these goals? [A new SolSmart issue brief](#), prepared by the Regulatory Assistance Project, sets out to answer these questions. This issue brief, *Solar and Resiliency: Integrative Financing Strategies for SolSmart Communities*, first places community energy resilience planning into the context of a stakeholder-driven identification of community goals. Once goals are established and understood, broad community support for specific energy resiliency projects becomes possible. —SolSmart, *News*, July 29, 2021: <https://solsmart.org/news/new-report-building-local-resilience-through-solar/>

Guide to 100% Clean Energy States

This guide provides state officials and other stakeholders with information about the 18 states (plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) that have adopted 100% clean energy goals. It includes information about the plans and other implementation reports that some of those states have produced. It is divided into five parts: Table of 100% Clean Energy States, Map and Timelines of 100% Clean Energy States, Summaries of State 100% Clean Energy Plans, Visual Comparison of State 100% Clean Energy Plans, and State Legislation, Plans, Reports and other Documents—Clean Energy States Alliance, August 19, 2021: <https://www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/guide-to-100-clean-energy-states/>

Report Shows Strong Solar+Storage Market Growth... and Plenty of Room for Improvement

Interest in pairing solar with battery storage has surged over the past few years, largely driven by concerns about the reliability of the country's outdated electric grid and the reality of increasingly severe power outages. A new report from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory provides a valuable initial look at residential and non-residential distributed solar+storage markets, showing significant growth and huge potential for the future. Read more and access the report—*Community Solar Projects and Programs: Today and Tomorrow*—Seth Mullendore, *PV Magazine*, August 13, 2021: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2021/08/13/report-shows-strong-solarstorage-market-growth-and-plenty-of-room-for-improvement/>

Upcoming Conferences, Webinars

Solar Celebration at the Hands on Children's Museum, Olympia, WA: October 2 at 6:00 p.m.

Please join Hummingbird and Solarize Thurston participants and partners for an eventful evening at the Hands on Children's Museum. They will be serving drinks, geeking out about solar, and enjoying the Museum's 150 exciting exhibits, 10 beautiful galleries and a half acre of outdoor space. You might even win a prize in a solar themed raffle. For more information see: <https://olysol.org/solarize-thurston/>

**The Washington State Solar Summit: Lynnwood Convention Center, Lynnwood, WA, October 22, 2021
Early Bird Discounted Registration Rates Ends October 8.**

In-person event with a livestream option. This is an important annual information gathering and networking event for industry stakeholders including manufacturers, installers, utilities, municipalities, legislators/policy makers, educators, students, tribal members, advocacy organizations/nonprofits, distributors, engineers, financial lenders, consultants and more. The Solar Summit attempts to tackle the most timely issues and most talked about conversations surrounding solar energy and solar adoption in Washington. The Washington State Solar Summit is the must-attend business conference for anyone engaged in solar deployment, education and advocacy in Washington state. Presented by Solar Washington. For more information and to register:

https://www.solarwa.org/2021_solar_summit_register

Go Clean Energy Conference Virtual and Free October 5-7, 2021

The Go Clean Energy Conference, a virtual event that is free to all, will feature 30 experts to help individuals, businesses, and government to transition to a cleaner, more efficient way of operating. For more information and to register see: <https://gocleanenergy.org/about/>

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

While every URL in Solar Newsbriefs is checked for accuracy prior to distribution, URLs may change, and servers may temporarily fail to connect to working URLs.

If any of your colleagues would like to be added to the distribution list to receive Solar Newsbriefs, or you would like to be omitted from this distribution list, please email your request and contact information to solarnewsbriefs@energy.wsu.edu.

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under the Solar Plus Strategies for Oregon and Washington award number DE-EE0007665.

This report was prepared as an account of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor any agency thereof, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof.