



**September 3, 2020**

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**

### **Portland Clean Energy Fund Awards \$200K, Millions to Follow**

The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund is turning on the tap for its first-ever round of grant funding. The city program — approved by 65% of the voters in 2018, and powered by a retail sales surcharge on large corporations — announced \$200,000 in funding divided among 42 community organizations on Wednesday, August 26—Zane Sparling, *Portland Tribune*, August 26, 2020:

<https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/478078-386429-portland-clean-energy-fund-awards-200k-millions-to-follow>

### **Energy Trust of Oregon's Inclusive Innovation Project: Leveraging Community Expertise to Develop Equitable Solar Programs**

Energy Trust of Oregon has a long history of clean energy innovation; it was involved in expanding the first Solarize program in the country in 2009. More recently, Energy Trust's Inclusive Innovation Project sought to adapt innovative business development models to create effective solar programs that reach under-resourced customers throughout Oregon. Over the past four years, staff have explored ways to make solar more affordable and accessible for lower-income customers, rural customers, and communities of color—Maria Blais Costello, *Renewable Energy World*, August 25, 2020:

<https://www.renewableenergyworld.com/2020/08/25/energy-trust-of-oregons-inclusive-innovation-project-leveraging-community-expertise-to-develop-equitable-solar-programs/>

### **Corvallis Solar Group Making Inroads**

Solarize Corvallis keeps chipping away by installing solar panels across the southwest portion of the city.

The group, a partnership led by the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition and the Oregon Clean Power Cooperative, installed a 150 kilowatt array at the Corvallis School District offices in March. On Wednesday, the group wrapped up a 100 kilowatt project at the Old Mill Center for Children and Families, just a few blocks away. Coming up, a 110 kilowatt install is set for the Benton County office building on nearby Southwest Research Way—James Day, *Corvallis Gazette-Times*, August 6, 2020: [https://www.gazettetimes.com/news/corvallis-solar-group-making-inroads/article\\_186d7b79-d888-5459-8815-d81d45d9b88c.html](https://www.gazettetimes.com/news/corvallis-solar-group-making-inroads/article_186d7b79-d888-5459-8815-d81d45d9b88c.html)

### **Invenergy Reaches Financial Close on Oregon Solar: The Prineville and Millican Solar Energy Centers will Generate 100MW of Power**

Invenergy and CoBank have completed construction financing for two solar projects totaling 100 megawatts, the Prineville and Millican Solar Energy Centers. The two projects in Crook County, Oregon are under construction and scheduled to be operational at the end of 2020. The projects are contracted under long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs) with PacifiCorp under a partnership which was announced in 2018 to support Facebook's data center in Prineville, Oregon, with new solar power—*ReNews.Biz*, August 6, 2020: <https://renews.biz/62281/invenergy-reaches-financial-close-on-oregon-solar/>

## **Washington News**

### **Wind Farm Plan Adds Solar and Battery Energy Storage in the Tri-Cities**

Scout Clean Energy ("Scout"), announced plans to add solar and battery storage components to a proposed wind farm that would be located just south of the Tri-Cities in Benton County, Washington. The innovative development will combine wind energy, solar energy, and battery energy storage in the same location - making more renewable energy available to customers during lower wind periods, and for short durations when the sun is not shining, and the wind is not blowing—*NBC RightNow.com*, August 31, 2020: [https://www.nbcrightnow.com/news/wind-farm-plan-adds-solar-and-battery-energy-storage-in-the-tri-cities/article\\_660e967a-ebe3-11ea-8082-2fe8c9fb6e31.html](https://www.nbcrightnow.com/news/wind-farm-plan-adds-solar-and-battery-energy-storage-in-the-tri-cities/article_660e967a-ebe3-11ea-8082-2fe8c9fb6e31.html)

### **Hop Supplier Installs Largest Solar Array in Washington State**

The largest rooftop solar array in Washington state has been installed by a hop supplier. Yakima Chief Hops (YCH), a farmer-owned hop supplier for the brewing industry, has announced their latest solar panel installation for a total of 3,706 solar panels. The company's headquarters are based in Yakima, Washington, known as the hop capitol of the world. YCH's solar array spans across six buildings, covering a total of 70,000 square feet with 3,706 solar panels and producing 1,414,766 kwh of electricity annually. YCH is able to capture 15% of their entire electricity demands and offset their annual emissions by 1,000 Metric tons—Emily Holbrook, *Environment + Energy Leader*, August 31, 2020: <https://www.environmentalleader.com/2020/08/hop-supplier-installs-largest-solar-array-in-washington-state/>

### **Guemes Island General Store's Solar Power System Goes Lives**

The Guemes Island General Store's array of 320 solar panels, installed in the field north of the store, is designed to convert sunlight into 118 kilowatts of electricity, producing 100% of the store's annual electricity needs—Richard Walker, *GoAnacortes*, September 2, 2020: <https://www.goskagit.com/anacortes/news/guemes-island-general-store-s-solar-power-system-goes-lives/>

[live/article\\_4b6e80de-ed21-11ea-b66f-975a4e13f29f.html](https://www.5280.com/2020/09/how-jacks-solar-garden-hopes-to-transform-farming-for-good/)

## **Agrivoltaics**

### **How Jack's Solar Garden Hopes To Transform Farming—For Good**

Sorry, Farmers' Almanac; Byron Kominek is harnessing something more high-tech to revitalize his family's 24-acre Boulder County farm. Called agrivoltaics, it calls for installing solar panels over crops to generate both electricity and a harvest. Here's how [Jack's Solar Garden](#), the nation's largest produce-producing agrivoltaics site, adds up—Yvonne Krumrey, *5280*, September 2020:

<https://www.5280.com/2020/09/how-jacks-solar-garden-hopes-to-transform-farming-for-good/>

### **Tinted Solar Panels: Generating Clean Energy While Growing Food**

In a future world, leafy vegetables may not be grown in rows of crops under the sun. Instead, they may be grown indoors beneath tinted semi-transparent solar panels that will allow farmers to grow food and produce energy. That's the future imagined in a recent study that shows how the use of this technology can benefit farmers and the climate—*Horti Daily*, August 27, 2020:

<https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9242934/generating-clean-energy-while-growing-food/>

### **Sheep, Ag and Sun: Agrivoltaics Propel Significant Reductions in Solar Maintenance Costs**

As the U.S. solar industry expands, arrays are spreading across more land – and the cost of keeping the sun on those panels through vegetation management is rising. A one-shot solution to both the land-use and cost challenges is emerging agrivoltaics. The term covers dual-use projects that co-locate agriculture and photovoltaic panels, and offer reduced O&M costs in the process—Lynn Freehill-Maye, *Utility Dive*, August 4, 2020: <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/sheep-ag-and-sun-agrivoltaics-propel-significant-reductions-in-solar-main/581879/>

## **Regional and National News**

### **Pacific Northwest Utilities Seek Thousands of Megawatts of New Renewable and Non-Emitting Energy: A Huge Opportunity for Independent Power Producers**

Driven by the need to comply with ambitious state targets for reduction of greenhouse gases in the utility sector, the recent and planned retirement of much of the region's coal fleet, and the capacity deficits that are anticipated as a result, utilities across the greater Pacific Northwest have recently or will soon issue requests for proposals (RFPs), which collectively create a market for roughly 6,000 megawatts (MW) of new renewable or non-emitting generation, as well as energy storage—Eric Christensen, *Beveridge & Diamond*, July 24, 2020: <https://www.bdlaw.com/publications/pacific-northwest-utilities-seek-thousands-of-megawatts-of-new-renewable-and-non-emitting-energy-a-huge-opportunity-for-independent-power-producers/>

## **COVID 19 and the Solar Industry**

### **Solar is Surprising Itself with a Rebound**

After staring into the abyss during the coronavirus lockdowns earlier this year, the solar industry is a bit startled to find itself thriving again. Many rooftop installers have hired back most of the people they furloughed. Stock prices are through the roof. The phones are ringing again with customers who want solar, this time with a side of batteries—David Ferris, *E&E News*, August 13, 2020:

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063711565>

## Reports

### **Berkeley Lab Report Evaluates Utility-Owned Rooftop Solar**

The rapid growth of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems can pose a number of financial challenges for both electric utility shareholders and their customers. One potential pathway to resolving those concerns involves allowing utilities to own and operate rooftop solar systems. However, the financial impacts of this business model are not well understood. In a [new study](#) published in the journal, *Nature Energy*, Berkeley Lab researchers model the financial performance of a hypothetical utility-owned residential rooftop solar program, evaluating its effects on both utility shareholder earnings and on non-solar customer bills—*Berkeley Lab Electricity Markets & Policy*, August 18, 2020:

<https://emp.lbl.gov/news/berkeley-lab-report-evaluates-utility-owned>

## Upcoming Conferences, Webinars, etc.

### **2020 *Virtual* Washington State Solar Summit, Friday October 16, 2020 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Each year the Solar Summit 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 business conference is for anyone engaged in solar deployment, education and advocacy in Washington state.* Early Bird rates end October 2, 2020. For more information and to register: [https://www.solarwa.org/2020\\_solar\\_summit](https://www.solarwa.org/2020_solar_summit)

### **GoGreen Conference, Seattle, WA, *Postponed* to September 8, 2020**

GoGreen empowers business decision makers with sustainability strategies, tools and connections to create positive change within their organizations by facilitating environmental, economic and social performance improvement through the topics and best practices covered at each conference for an action packed day of driving social and sustainable change in your organization. To learn more and to register: <http://seattle.gogreenconference.net/>

### **Go Clean Energy Conference *Virtual* Beginning September 15 and Ending October 2, 2020**

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 see: <https://gocleanenergy.org/about/>

### **Oregon Solar Energy Conference: Going *Virtual*, October 6-8, 2020**

In 2019, the Oregon Solar Energy Conference hosted over 500 attendees representing over 220 companies. The conference offered over 20 hours registered for NABCEP CE. Check this event out in 2020. To submit session proposals and for further information see: <https://www.oseia.org/osec/>

### **25th Annual National Solar Tour, Going *Virtual*, September 28-October 4, 2020**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Solar Energy Society (ASES) and Solar United

Neighbors (SUN) have decided to host an all-virtual National Solar Tour for the first time ever. During this week, solar owners and supporters will have a chance to connect, ask and answer questions, and participate in a nationwide virtual solar experience: To RSVP see: <https://www.nationalsolartour.org/>

**Innovative Pathways to Developing Solar+Storage in Low-Income Communities: Norfolk Solar's Qualified Opportunity Zone Fund, *Webinar*, September 10, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. PDT**

This webinar, presented by Clean Energy Group, will showcase Norfolk Solar and the Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) Fund formed to advance renewable energy generation, storage, and racial equity in low-income communities in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia—For more information and to register see: <https://www.cleangroup.org/webinar/developing-solar-storage-in-low-income-communities-norfolk-solar/>

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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](mailto:whitneya@energy.wsu.edu)

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