



**August 1, 2024**

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**

### **PGE Expands Rooftop Solar at Five Operational Facilities**

More Oregonians are adding solar panels to their roofs to increase energy efficiency at home and reduce their power costs. In neighborhoods throughout PGE's service area, you can find panels on residential homes, apartment buildings, schools and community centers – and increasingly, on PGE's own operational facilities... Since 2012, PGE has installed rooftop solar on five of its properties and continues to explore ways to conserve energy in its owned buildings. By transforming offices, operation and training centers into sites for solar power generation, the company is expanding its use of renewable energy while reducing energy costs and demand on the grid—Portland General Electric, [Press Release], June 19, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **100 Affordable Apartments Opening on Former Marylhurst University Campus**

After years of sitting first as a vacant lot, then two years of intense construction, the doors are open for Lake Oswego's newest affordable housing development. The new community, named "[Mercy Greenbrae at Marylhurst commons](#)," will bring 100 new affordable units to the site of the former Marylhurst University campus, and will be managed by the nonprofit Mercy Housing Northwest... One of the biggest selling points for the Marylhurst Commons project is its commitment to sustainable energy efficient design—Rhys Holmes, KGW-TV Portland, July 17, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Rural Oregon Solar Installer Finds Niche in Multifamily Housing**

For solar contractors working in agricultural communities, substantial projects are commonly ground-mounted and built across many acres of fields and farmland. Bucking this trend, a solar company from a rural county in northeast Oregon has become a regional authority in building PV projects on affordable housing developments, and the contractor's work can now be found across the state—Billy Ludt, *Solar Power World*, July 23, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Avangrid Hires 5,000 Sheep for Grazing on Two Solar Projects in the Pacific Northwest**

Avangrid, member of the Iberdrola Group, has partnered with a fifth-generation Oregon rancher to graze sheep at two solar farms in Oregon and Washington, and launched likely the largest "solar

grazing” operation in the region. Solar grazing is a vegetation management method used at solar energy facilities that uses grazing livestock, like sheep, instead of machinery. Sheep are effective at limiting the growth of weeds and vegetation, cutting down on wildfire risks while replacing the use of gas-powered machines—Kelly Pickerel, *Solar Power World*, July 24, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Industry Publication Honors Enterprise Electric's Wecks for Solar Work**

Jeffrey Wecks, an electrician and solar installation foreman at Enterprise Electric, has been named the 2024 Top Solar Installer by Solar Power World, [the publication announced July 23](#). "Wecks is a self-motivated, hardworking installer who runs a crew of five that travels across Oregon installing both commercial and residential projects," the industry publication stated—Bill Bradshaw, *East Oregonian*, July 30, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Brookfield Renewable Announces 900-MW Solar, Storage Combo in Oregon**

New York City-headquartered renewables developer-operator Brookfield Renewable US has announced its intentions to pursue the development of the 900-MW Speedway solar-plus-storage project in Sherman County, Oregon... Furthermore, the company plans to arrange the solar arrays “in ribbons” along the edge of fields to protect existing agricultural and wildlife corridors and allow for the continued agricultural use of the land, it stated. The Speedway project is expected to create hundreds of jobs during construction and provide employment opportunities and tax contributions once in operation—Sladjana Djunisic, *Renewables Now*, July 31, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

## **Washington State News**

### **State Grant to Fund Twisp Civic Building Solar Array**

The Town of Twisp has secured a \$1.1 million Community Decarbonization grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce to install solar panels paired with battery storage on the Twisp Civic Building and Emergency Operations Center. The grant aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep the building’s grid resilient in the event of a wildfire-induced power outage. The Civic Building was designed specifically to accommodate solar panels—Mia Limmer-Lai, *Methow Valley News*, July 4, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Washington State Awards \$52 Million from Carbon Auctions for Tribal Climate Adaptation**

More than \$50 million in revenue from Washington State’s carbon market auctions is going to 32 tribal nations across the Northwest for clean-energy projects and efforts to better safeguard communities from the effects of climate change. The effects on Indigenous communities are varied, from the rising tide gnawing at communities on the Pacific Ocean to shorelines thick with dead fish due to low water levels or oxygen to wildfires racing through the ponderosa pines... The grants will support relocation to higher ground for coastal tribes such as Quinault and Shoalwater Bay; they’ll help tribes including Samish, Spokane, Makah, Tulalip and Swinomish build solar energy, battery storage and other energy security efforts; and support vehicle electrification and charging infrastructure for Hoh, Sauk-Suiattle, Muckleshoot and others—Isabella Breda, *The Spokesman Review*, July 17, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

**To Meet Clean Energy goals, the West Coast will Need to Produce, Store and Share More Power**

Across the country, many states are trying to transition away from fossil fuels and toward clean methods of energy production. Oregon is no exception, having set goals for power utility companies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity sold in Oregon to 100% below baseline by 2040. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council reports that the region will use about 22,000 average annual megawatts in 2024. One megawatt can power 796 homes in the Northwest, meaning about 17.5 million homes could be powered in 2024—Pat Dooris, Liz Kreutz, KGW, July 12, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Solar Planned for Port of Camas-Washougal HQ, Grove Field**

The Port of Camas-Washougal is moving forward with a plan to install solar power at its administrative office and at the Grove Field airport north of Camas. In April, the Port's board of commissioners approved two contracts with Portland-based Power Northwest to install solar power and battery back-up systems at the Port's administrative office for \$102,486, and at Grove Field for \$219,966—Doug Flanagan, *Camas-Washougal Post-Record*, July 11, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Tumwater to Purchase Solar-Powered EV Charger in Cloudy Western Washington**

The City of Tumwater in western Washington, an area of the state notorious for its cloudy weather throughout most of the year, plans to test a solar-powered electric vehicle charging station. The Tumwater City Council unanimously voted on July 2 to approve the purchase and installation of the two-port solar charger known as the EV ARC system, which will be off-grid, backed up by a battery, and meet accessibility standards issued under the Americans with Disabilities Act—Carleen Johnson, *The Everett Post*, July 12, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **CWU Receives Nearly \$1 Million for Solar Decarbonization Projects**

One of the CAP's primary objectives is a commitment to help CWU become a zero-carbon campus — a goal that can only be achieved by a broad, well-coordinated approach. Helping fuel this effort will be a pair of grants awarded by the Washington State Department of Commerce, which announced the recipients of the Community Decarbonization 2024 Grant Program on June 17... CWU was awarded \$473,467 to install a 100 kilowatt solar system on the roof of Dugmore Hall, and an additional \$451,642 to conduct a large-scale solar study for the rest of the CWU Ellensburg campus as a way of identifying additional opportunities to significantly expand solar capacity—Rune Torgersen, Central Washington University [website], July 10, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Money from Washington's Landmark Climate Law will Help Tribes Face Rising Seas, Climate Change**

Tens of millions of dollars raised by a landmark climate law in Washington state will go to Native American tribes that are at risk from climate change and rising sea levels to help them move to higher ground, install solar panels, buy electric vehicles and restore wetlands, Gov. Jay Inslee announced Tuesday—Gene Johnson and Hallie Golden, *Associated Press*, July 17, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **At Gov. Jay Inslee's Order, Council Restores Windmills to Horse Heaven Renewable Energy Project**

A state council yielded Wednesday to Gov. Jay Inslee and took a step toward approving the Horse Heaven wind and solar project in southeast Washington largely as proposed by Scout Clean Energy. The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council directed planners to draw up a new recommendation that would allow nearly all 222 turbines that Scout proposes to build on farmland near the Tri-Cities—

Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, July 18, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Wautoma Solar Project Next to Step into the Spotlight**

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council will hold a hearing in September on Benton County's opposition to a Canadian company's plan to lease more than 5,000 acres of farmland for the Wautoma solar project... Innergex Renewable Development has lined up leases with ranchers and farmers in a remote area about 12 miles northeast of Sunnyside and 1 mile south of State Route 241 and SR 24 interchange. It would be Washington's largest solar installation—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, July 24, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **DOE Announces Cleanup to Clean Energy Project at Hanford Site**

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced it would enter negotiations with Hecate Energy, LLC for a solar project within an 8,000-acre area of the Hanford nuclear cleanup site in south-central Washington. "With today's announcement, DOE is transforming thousands of acres of land at our Hanford site into a thriving center of carbon-free solar power generation, leading by example in cleaning up our environment and delivering new economic opportunities to local communities," said Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm—U.S. DOE, [Press Release], July 25, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

### **Manhattan Project Nuclear Site Reimagined as a 1 GW Solar Farm**

A 580-square mile slice of semi-arid desert in southeast Washington that was used to produce nearly two-thirds of the plutonium used in the United States' nuclear weapon stockpile is being reimagined as a 1 gigawatt (GW) solar farm with energy storage. If built to that capacity, it would be the largest solar project in the country... The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has announced it will enter into realty negotiations with Hecate Energy for a solar project capable of delivering up to 1 gigawatt of clean energy within an 8,000-acre area of the former nuclear weapons production site—Sean Wolfe, Paul Gerke, *Renewable Energy World*, July 30, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

## **National News and Beyond**

### **Supreme Court Overturns FERC Solar Approval After Chevron's Demise**

A Montana solar project may be one of the first casualties of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the *Chevron* doctrine. In a short order Tuesday, the justices granted a request to reverse a lower court ruling affirming the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of the Broadview solar array and battery storage facility in Billings, Montana. The order was one of nine directing federal courts to reconsider decisions on everything from Internal Revenue Service audits to the removal of officials from federal offices, based on Friday's *Chevron* ruling—Nina H. Farah, *E&E News*, July 3, 2024: [Click here more.](#)

### **US Starts to Build Solar on Ex-Nuclear Sites Across the Country**

Last month, two developers entered into exclusive lease negotiations with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to build 400 MW of solar capacity at the 890-square-mile Idaho National Laboratory (INL) site... NorthRenew Energy Partners will build 300 MW solar plus battery storage on a 2,000 acre site while developer Spitfire will install 100 MW of solar plus storage on 500 acres, following a competitive

request for qualifications (RFQ) process. The land has been cleaned up following historic civil and military nuclear testing and radioactive waste management—Neil Ford, *Reuters*, July 4, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Six States Offer Grants to Help Local Governments Automate Solar Permitting**

Automated permitting for distributed solar and storage is set to expand well beyond California, as five states follow California's lead in offering grant support to localities to help them switch to automated permitting. An automated process can issue a permit "instantly" to a distributed solar project that meets all permitting requirements, according to the U.S. Department of Energy... In Washington, state legislators early this year allocated \$600,000 for a grant program. The state's solar trade group WASEIA provided written testimony to the Washington House Appropriations Committee and a policy brief supporting the budget provision "to help speed rollout of SolarApp+," said Bill Will, the association's senior policy advisor.—William Driscoll, *pv magazine*, July 29, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Chicago Company Plans Solar Project in Benton County**

The Chicago company given the inside track to build a massive solar installation on the Hanford nuclear reservation in southeast Washington also will propose a solar project on nearby private rangeland. Hecate Energy was already laying the groundwork for a 100-megawatt solar plant in Benton County when the Energy Department solicited proposals last year to develop a renewable energy project at Hanford... At Hanford, the department envisions a solar project with a maximum output of 1-gigawatt, exceeding the combined output of all current solar installations in Washington—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, July 30, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **The Climate Law is Helping Bring Solar to More Apartment Buildings**

Earlier this month, renewable energy developer Black Bear Energy and clean-energy finance company [Evergrow](#) unveiled a set of solar projects structured to make the most of the climate law's tax credit bonanza. It's a relatively small solar investment — 556 kilowatts of projects across several multifamily properties in California and Washington, D.C., owned by real estate investment trust Equity Residential. But as a first-of-its-kind application of the Inflation Reduction Act's [new tax-credit transferability rules](#), it's a pretty big deal, says Evergrow CEO James Richards. His company managed the sale of the tax credits for the solar projects owned by Equity Residential to companies that wanted to reduce their tax burdens—Jeff St. John, *Canary Media*, July 30, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

## **Agrivoltaics**

### **Talbott Farms Gets \$700k Grant for Agri-Voltaic System**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced this week that it was awarding a \$713,000 grant to Palisade's Talbott Farms for a 420-kilowatt agrivoltaic solar array over one of its peach orchards. Charlie Talbott of Talbott Farms said when the array is constructed, it should generate enough electricity to power its entire packing and processing facility. It will cover a little more than one acre of peach trees adjacent to their packing facility in Palisade—Dan West, *The Daily Sentinel*, July 8, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

### **Agrivoltaics Conserve Precious Water for Arizona Farmers**

Farmers in Arizona have a problem — too much sun and not enough water. Agrivoltaics, which combines solar panels and agriculture, is offering some relief, however. According to [Tucson.com](#), last summer, Phoenix hit or topped 110° F for 31 days straight, the longest such streak ever (there is a good chance that dubious record will be shattered this summer). That searing heat in Arizona dehydrates crops and evaporates water the state desperately needs to conserve. Creating shade using agrivoltaics is one way to combat the problem—Steve Hanley, *Clean Technica*, July 15, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

## Community Solar

### Success Story—Working with Co-ops to Increase Community Solar Access

Community solar projects provide individuals and communities who might not otherwise be able to afford or install solar panels the opportunity to benefit from solar energy without having to own a roof or provide upfront capital. But the majority—approximately three quarters—of U.S. community solar projects are concentrated in four states: Florida, New York, Minnesota, and Massachusetts, partially due to legislation that requires or allows utilities to offer community solar programs—US Dept. of Energy, *Clean Technica*, July 12, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

## Conferences, Webinars and Other Events

### DOE Equitable Solar Communities of Practice Community Convening: Resilience, Storage and Grid Benefits: Webinar August 5

Join Clean Energy Group in exploring the best practices, opportunities, and obstacles in advancing resilient power – solar PV paired with battery storage (solar+storage) – in historically marginalized communities. [Click here for more information and to register](#).

### GirlsBuild Solar Summer Camps!

[GirlsBuild](#) is a construction summer camp for girls to give them the experience of seeing female professionals in the trades as their instructors and learn first-hand that they have the ability to go solar by making a solar take-home gadget.

- Willamina, OR / Ages 8-15 Aug 5 – 9
- Tillamook, OR / Ages 8-15 Aug 12-16, 2024
- Warrenton Summer Camp Aug 19-23, 2024

This project came from a partnership between BEF, Verde, Port of Portland, Imagine Energy, Leaders Become Legends, Dignity Village, and Twende Solar. This organization is operating under the Oregon Community Solar Program. The Oregon Community Solar Program is a state-enabled initiative overseen by the Oregon Public Utility Commission and implemented by Energy Solutions, Energy Trust of Oregon, and Community Energy Project. The program provides resources and certification for its Project Managers (PMs) but does not promote any individual PM or PM affiliated organization. [Click here for more information and to register](#).

### International Conference on Energy Conversion & Storage: Bainbridge Island, August 5-7, 2024

The University of Washington's Clean Energy Institute 2024 International Conference on Energy



Conversion & Storage (ORCAS) featuring leaders in clean energy research and technology to present conference sessions, seminars, workshops and career panels. Deadline to register is June 30. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**Burien Solar Punk Festival : Burien, WA : August 10, 2024**

“Solar Punk” is the festival theme, which envisions a future where community and technology are integrated to create a self-sustaining system. In this event, attendees will learn about alternative self-sustaining ways to work and power their daily lives... The proceeds from The Burien Solar Punk Festival will be utilized to support: Key Tech Labs Green Jobs Expo, Mini Jobs Fair, Small Business Expo, funds for a new micro solar system, and stipends for the youth Green Pre-Apprenticeship Program participants. [Click here for more information.](#)

**Agrivoltaic Development Workshop : Longmont, CO : August 15 & 16, 2024**

Two days of interactive presentations and hands-on activities at Jack’s Solar Garden. There will be presentations from Byron Kominek, owner and operator of Jack's Solar Garden, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Colorado State University (CSU), CALC staff, solar grazing professionals and other individuals and businesses within the industries. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**RE+ Northwest : Tacoma, WA : August 20-22, 2024**

Join clean energy industry colleagues at the inaugural RE+ Northwest, co-located with the Green Transportation Summit & Expo, and explore the integration of solar, storage, and additional renewable energy assets like wind energy and electric vehicle infrastructure in the region. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**A Webinar for Washington Municipalities: Automating Solar Permitting with SOLARAPP+™ : August 23, 2024**

As cities and counties across the United States make commitments to curb emissions and deploy more renewable energy resources, SolarAPP+™ can help accelerate this transition. Developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, SolarAPP+™ can run compliance checks and process building permit approvals for eligible rooftop solar systems. Find out how it can help your jurisdiction in this 60 min. webinar. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**RE+ 24: Renewing What’s Possible : Anaheim, CA September 9-12, 2024**

Registration is now open! Get ready for an incredible week at the Anaheim Convention Center & Campus as RE+ celebrates its 20th Anniversary year. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**ASES National Solar Tour : October 4-6, 2024**

Hosted by the [American Solar Energy Society \(ASES\)](#) for over 29 years, the purpose of the National Solar Tour is to promote renewable energy awareness and increase the adoption of solar energy. The National Solar Tour centers around neighborhood discussions about solar. In person and virtually throughout the year. [Click here for more information.](#)

**2024 Washington State Solar Summit : Shoreline Community College : October 4, 2024**

Hosted by Solar Washington since 2015 the Washington State Solar Summit is an important annual

information gathering and networking event for solar industry stakeholders including manufacturers, distributors, engineers, consultants and installers, representatives from utilities, municipalities and tribes, legislators/policy makers, educators, students, advocacy organizations/nonprofits, financial lenders, and more. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**Oregon Solar + Storage Conference : Portland Crowne Plaza, October 22-24, 2024**

Registration is now open for the 2024 Oregon Solar + Storage Conference! OSSIA members can receive an extra 5% discount - on top of the OSSIA member 30% discount! Early bird discount ends August 15th so register now! [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

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