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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 <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/solarnewsbriefs.aspx>

Oregon News

Amazon Web Services Awards Solar Installations to 10 Eastern Oregon facilities

Amazon Web Services awarded \$1.2 million in rooftop solar installations for local nonprofits and community facilities across Eastern Oregon... GRID Alternatives in partnership with AWS announced Wednesday, Oct. 30, the renewable energy initiative project will benefit 10 local nonprofit organizations and community places spanning across Morrow and Umatilla counties—*East Oregonian*, Nov 1, 2024, Updated Nov 5, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Oregon EFSC Adopts Rules to Clarify Contested Case Procedures for Energy Projects

The Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) has introduced rule changes to clarify the contested case procedures for large-scale energy project approvals. Contested cases are similar to administrative trials and are one of the final steps in the EFSC site certification process. EFSC's rule changes, effective October 1, 2024, aim to enhance clarity, improve public participation, and streamline procedural efficiency—Sara Sayles, Garrett Stephenson, *JD Supra*, Nov 11, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Beyond the Grid: Building Resilient Communities with Renewable Energy

This is the third in a series of posts on energy resilience. The first two looked at [how solar + storage can help make homes more resilient to outages](#) and explored [how energy resilience can be scaled up to benefit entire communities](#). This post looks at how energy resilience efforts contribute to Oregon's energy future through distributed renewables... As climate challenges intensify, energy resilience is becoming increasingly critical for communities across Oregon. One powerful approach to building this resilience lies in distributed renewable energy systems. Unlike traditional large power plants, distributed renewables are small-scale systems, such as solar panels with battery storage, installed directly on homes, businesses and local facilities. These localized energy sources empower communities by delivering clean, reliable power and bolstering resilience against power outages and disruptions—Energy Trust of Oregon, Blog, Nov 20, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Massive Solar Farm Planned for BLM Land near Redmond Greenlit for Environmental Review

A multinational green energy developer planning to install solar panels on thousands of acres of Bureau of Land Management land in Deschutes County cleared a key hurdle this week when regulators announced that land for the project could be set aside for an environmental review—
Michael Kohn, *The Bulletin*, Nov 22, 2024, updated Nov 23, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

BLM Reviews Land Planned for Solar Farm near Redmond

The Bureau of Land Management announced Nov. 22 it will temporarily set aside about 4,037 acres of public lands associated with a proposed Expedition Solar Project within Deschutes County, near Redmond. The land will be [withdrawn from public land laws](#) for two years while the BLM reviews the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, according to a press release.—
Julianna LaFollette, *Source Weekly*, Nov 29, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Avangrid and Portland General Electric Collaborate with QTS and Meta to Build 120 MWac Solar Project in Oregon

Avangrid, Inc., a leading sustainable energy company and member of the Iberdrola Group, and Portland General Electric (PGE) (NYSE: POR), are announcing the signing of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for Tower Solar, a new 120 MWac (166 MWdc) solar energy project now under construction in Morrow County, Oregon, in collaboration with QTS and Meta. The facility will deliver clean, renewable energy to Portland General Electric's grid through Green Future Impact (GFI), a voluntary program designed to help large commercial, industrial, and municipal customers meet their ambitious sustainability and carbon reduction goals through the development of new clean energy facilities in our region—*Businesswire*, Dec 2, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Partner Start Work on Developing Reservation's First Solar Power Project

Warm Springs Power & Water Enterprises, which manages the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs' energy assets and facilities, announced Monday that it will collaborate with renewable energy developer BrightNight to develop the Salmonfly Project, a utility-scale solar energy and battery energy storage project on the Warm Springs Reservation—KTVA News Channel 21, Dec 2, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Washington State News

Update on the WSU Energy Program's Community Solar Expansion Program

Soon to enter its 3rd year, the Community Solar Expansion Program (CSEP), administered by the Washington State University (WSU) Energy Program has approved more than a dozen community solar projects under the direction of [2SHB 1814](#). This legislation directs the WSU Energy Program to implement and administer a community solar incentive program which provides \$100 million in payments – over 10 years – for the development of projects benefiting low-income individuals, low-income service providers, and qualifying tribal or public agencies. Check the [CSEP webpage](#) for more information on the program, projects under way, current statistics on estimated available and allocated funding, and view the [CSEP map](#) to see where projects are located.

The Thunderdome Solar Project at Evergreen State College

On October 29th the Evergreen State College and Olympia Community Solar hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the Thunderdome Solar Project! Students at Evergreen have long envisioned a solar energy powered campus. Several student projects over the years have led to solar installations on the Daniel J. Evans Library, the modular housing, and on Evergreen Tacoma campus. In 2023, a group of visionary students led this effort to successfully fund the largest solar project in the College's history. In 2023 Committee members Emma Wright and Keira Jensen worked with Olympia Community Solar to assess the feasibility of installing solar on the Covered Recreation Pavilion (known affectionately to students as the "Thunderdome").—Olympia Community Solar, Oct 2024, [Click here to read more.](#)

Judge Ruling Could Open Path for Green Energy Projects

Yakima County and nearby areas have paused large-scale green energy projects, including solar and wind farms, due to concerns over agricultural land use. However, a recent court decision could reshape the landscape for such developments... Judge Dan Gerard determined EFSEC can override local zoning laws if environmental standards are met. This paves the way for EFSEC to recommend that Gov. Jay Inslee approve the Wautoma Solar Project, a 470-megawatt solar installation proposed near the Yakima-Benton county line—Anisa Williams, KIMA, Nov 4, updated Nov 5, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Celebrating Solar Energy at Veterans Village

New Horizon Communities and South Sound Solar on Oct. 30 hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony and reception marking the completion of the Shelton Veterans Village solar project in Shelton. "It takes a special dedication to come out in the rain," said Dave Redman, the program supervisor at the Shelton Veterans Village... Construction of the solar array on Shelton Veterans Village's 30 tiny homes and community center was completed in September... The Shelton Veterans Village has 156 solar panels, 102 of them on the tiny houses and 54 on the community center. South Sound Solar designed and installed the 61.5kW Solar System—Gordon Weeks, *Shelton-Mason County Journal*, Nov 7, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Orting Veterans Village Solar Project

Construction of the solar array on Orting Veterans Village's 35 tiny homes and community center was completed in July of this year. As an integral community resource for the unhoused in Pierce County, Orting Veterans Village is an ideal location for hosting solar. The Orting Veterans Village solar project includes 4 to 8 solar panels across each of the thirty five tiny homes, depending on their orientation to the sun, and 103 panels on the community building (a total of 315 panels)—Solar Washington, Nov 14, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

REC Silicon Trying to Stay Afloat while it's First Polysilicon Shipment Lingers in Testing Purgatory

U.S. polysilicon manufacturer REC Silicon has reduced the utilization of its Moses Lake, Washington facility to 15% capacity and has frozen hiring to preserve capital as it waits for its first shipment, bound for QCells, to clear customs and qualification tests—Paul Gerke, *Renewable Energy World*, Nov 14, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

EFSEC Overrides County, Approves Solar Panels on Farmland

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council overrode Benton County's farmland-preservation law and voted Nov. 20 to recommend Washington Gov. Jay Inslee permit a solar project on 3,000 acres of agricultural land... The Wautoma solar project, with a maximum capacity of 470 megawatts, would be one of Washington's larger solar installations. Although opposed by the county, the proposal received little other opposition...Solar panels and batteries would be in a remote valley about 40 miles west of the Tri-Cities in southeast Washington—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Nov 20, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Horse Heaven Wind and Solar Project Developers Sign Off on Final Site Certification

On Thursday afternoon, project developers behind the planned Horse Heaven wind and solar project in Benton County signed off on the final site certification... A news release from Scout Clean Energy emailed to The Center Square said, in part, "Scout Clean Energy (Scout), a national utility-scale renewable energy developer-owner-operator, is pleased to announce it has signed the Site Certification Agreement (SCA) for the Horse Heaven Clean Energy Center issued by the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) following Governor Inslee's approval. The signing marks the culmination of an extensive, multi-year permitting process and allows Scout to continue moving forward toward the construction of the largest clean energy project in Washington State history."—Carleen Johnson, *The Center Square*, Nov 21, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

The Dirt: Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center to Develop a Microgrid with Avista

The Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center and Avista Corp. are partnering to develop a microgrid, which is an operation that runs on electricity produced on-site. The location for the project will be the Outreach Center, which provides education, social services and cultural enrichment programs for children and families, according to its website. Called the MLK Center Resiliency Project, Avista will fund the installation of solar panels, batteries, and associated electrical equipment for the microgrid—Tod Stephens, *Spokesman-Review*, Nov 24, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

State Panel Recommends Governor Approve Wautoma Solar Project

The Wautoma Solar Project, located just outside the northeast corner of Yakima County, has been recommended by state officials for Gov. Jay Inslee's approval. Members of the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council voted unanimously last week to [recommend approval](#) of the 470-megawatt solar facility that includes a four-hour, 470 MW battery energy storage system. It would be built on 4,573 acres of privately owned land near the intersection of State Routes 24 and 241, roughly 13 miles north of Sunnyside—Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, Dec 1, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Yakima Nation Sues Inslee Over Horse Heaven Wind and Solar Project

The Yakama Nation has sued Washington Gov. Jay Inslee over his approval of the Horse Heaven wind and solar project, claiming the governor put green energy over environmental justice. The tribe filed the suit Tuesday in Thurston County Superior Court. Benton County and a citizens group, Tri-City CARES, also have sued to stop what would be Washington's largest renewable energy installation—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, Dec 3, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

National News

USDA REAP Funding Renewed for FY 2025-2027 to Support Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects

On October 18, 2024, The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that an additional \$600 million from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) has been made available for funding three additional rounds of applications for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) for fiscal years 2025, 2026, and 2027—Griffin Smith, NC Clean Energy Technology Center, Nov 19, 2024: [Click here to read more](#). See also: U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development: [Rural Energy For America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans & Grants](#)

Solar Panels on Religious Buildings Save Money — and Inspire Congregants to Give Green Energy a Try

The Inflation Reduction Act includes money to help homeowners, businesses and nonprofits make their buildings more climate-friendly. And since the IRA passed, a surprising group is really punching above its weight in the solar adoption game. Houses of worship are three times more likely to adorn their roofs with panels than the average non-residential building, according to the Department of Energy—Caleigh Wells, *Marketplace*, Nov 15, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Boise Airport Now Powered by 100% Clean Energy through Idaho Power Program

The Boise Airport became powered by 100% clean energy this fall after Boise opted to be the first city to sign on to an optional new renewable energy program through Idaho Power. The city of Boise is purchasing enough solar energy to power both the Boise Airport and the Lander Street wastewater treatment facility through 100% clean energy, Steve Hubble, climate action manager for the city of Boise, said in an interview Thursday—Clark Corbin, *Idaho Capital Sun*, Nov 18, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Technology Companies Lead Solar and Storage Installations in the US

Technology companies are the biggest commercial investors into the solar power sector in the US, with Meta, Amazon and Google using the greatest capacity of solar power in the country. This is the headline takeaway from the latest edition of the 'Solar Means Business report, published by the US trade body, the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).—JP Casey, *pv-tech*, Nov 20, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

U.S. Solar Generation Continues to Make Huge Gains in 2024

2024 has been an impressive year for renewable energy growth so far, according to the latest [Electric Power Monthly release](#) from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Solar continues to grow the fastest in the U.S. During the first nine months of 2024, utility-scale solar power generation (thermal and PV) output increased a whopping 30.1% from the same period in 2023. Estimated total solar from all facilities (utility- and smaller-scale) increased 25.1% during this same period—Kevin Clark, *Power Engineering*, Nov 27, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

Reports

Quantifying Clean Energy Justice: Impact of Solarize Programs on Rooftop Solar Disparities in the Pacific Northwest

This study investigates the dynamics of rooftop solar deployment disparities in relation to Solarize programs in metropolitan cities in the Pacific Northwest. This study investigates the dynamics of rooftop solar deployment disparities in relation to Solarize programs in metropolitan cities in the Pacific Northwest. We introduce four equity domains and five disparity indices that encompass aspects of distributional and recognition justice, placing emphasis on spatial distribution and deployment patterns—Yohan Min, Hyun Woo Lee, *Sustainable Cities and Society*, May 2024. [Click here to continue reading abstract and access full text.](#)

Conferences, Webinars and other Upcoming Events

Energy Resilience Planning for Local Governments Workshop: Dec 6, 2024 Virtual

Join Sustainable Northwest and Energy Trust of Oregon for the 3rd Annual Energy Resilience Planning for Local Governments Workshop. This free, virtual, half-day workshop is aimed at connecting city and county staff with funding, resources, and organizations to help with the planning and implementation necessary to make their community more energy-resilient and prepared for future disasters. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Solar Power and Energy Storage Mountain West : Denver, CO, Jan 20-22, 2025

Presented by the Colorado Solar and storage Association (COSSA), this conference is designed to advance your understanding of new policies and opportunities to equip your business with the necessary skills to compete in the ever-developing clean energy industry. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Intersolar & Energy Storage North America (IESNA) : San Diego, CA, Feb 25-27, 2025

Intersolar & Energy Storage North America offers clean energy professionals an unmatched opportunity to gain critical insights, make impactful connections, source quality products—and have fun. This Flagship Expo & Conference will deliver a nationwide look into solar, storage, EV charging infrastructure, and manufacturing at federal and state levels. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Oregon Solar + Storage Conference: May 13-15, 2025 (Save the Date)

A conference promoting, clean, renewable solar and storage technologies in the state of Oregon. [Click here for more information.](#)

2025 Community Solar Innovation Summit: Denver, CO, June 26-2027, 2025

The only national conference put on by the community solar industry for the community solar industry. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

ASES Solar 2025: Innovation for Universal Renewable Energy Access: University of Colorado, Boulder, Aug 4-6, 2025 (Save the Date)

This year's conference, themed "[Innovation for Universal Renewable Energy Access](#)," will explore the latest, most impactful, cutting-edge practices, policies, and technologies driving the just and equitable transformation in the U.S. and worldwide to a carbon-free global energy economy. Click here for more information. [Click here for more information](#).

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