



June 6, 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

\$86.6 Million in Federal Funding will Expand Solar Access in Oregon

\$86.6 million in federal funding will be coming to the state of Oregon. The five pathway plan will provide low income residents to reduce their power bills, install solar panels on their homes, or take part in community solar projects... The Oregon Solar for All Coalition includes the Oregon Department of Energy, Energy Trust of Oregon, and Bonneville Environmental Foundation. They applied for funding during the fall—Damien Alvarado, KDRV NewsWatch, April 30, 2024: https://www.kdrv.com/news/top-stories/86-6-million-in-federal-funding-will-expand-solar-access-in-oregon/article_fa717cca-0727-11ef-b3c2-5f1311429707.html

Portland Schools Could see \$50 Million Boost for Climate Action

The Portland Clean Energy Fund is one step closer in investing tens of millions of dollars in seven school districts within Portland city limits to boost renewable energy upgrades and climate action over the next five years... The Climate Friendly Public Schools plan [would invest \\$50 million toward seven school districts](#). The money would fund projects like energy efficient retrofits for older buildings, including air conditioning, heat and improved air ventilation. The money would also go toward installing solar panels and energy efficient appliances, purchasing electric school buses, and increasing tree canopy in schoolyards— Monica Samayoa, OPB, April 26, 2024 updated May 1, 2024:

<https://www.opb.org/article/2024/04/26/portland-clean-energy-fund-schools-investment/>

Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde to Open New Energy Efficient Health Clinic

What should be prioritized in the construction of a new building? For the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, decisions are made for the good of their members and for the good of the land they steward. The Tribe recently completed two building projects that serve both priorities: improving life for Tribal members with new affordable housing and healthcare services, while also making the Tribe more resilient to climate change with leading edge renewable and energy efficient technologies—Energy Trust of Oregon, *Blog*, May 10, 2024: <https://blog.energytrust.org/confederated-tribes-of-the-grand-ronde-to-open-new-energy-efficient-health-clinic/>

Strong State Solar Policies Boost Adoption of Distributed Energy

The U.S. recently [exceeded five million solar installations](#), with the residential sector accounting for 97% of all solar installations in the U.S., according to data from the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and Wood Mackenzie... A recent report, [The state\(s\) of distributed solar—2023 update](#) from the Institute of Local Self Reliance (ILSR), estimates that 29 GW of solar capacity was installed in 2023; 31% of which is distributed solar. Distributed solar is solar that is owned by individuals, small businesses and public entities—and is generated at or very near the site where it is used—Anne Fischer, *pv magazine*, May 20, 2024: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2024/05/20/strong-state-solar-policies-boost-adoption-of-distributed-energy/>

Climate Cast: A Spotlight on Clean Energy Stories

The Biden-Harris administration celebrated Earth Day 2024 by granting states \$7 billion to expand solar across the country through the [Solar for All](#) program. The state of Oregon [was recently awarded \\$86 million](#) for rooftop solar projects for lower-income residents. The extra cool news: combined with existing federal and state solar incentive programs, this may bring the upfront costs of rooftop solar to [nearly zero for many eligible households](#)—Jonathan Lee, Climate Solutions, May 31, 2024: <https://www.climatesolutions.org/article/2024-05/solar-accessibility-soar-oregons-lower-income-households>

Home Energy Spotlight: Save more in 2024 by Combining tax credits and Energy Trust incentives

For families looking to save money, there's never been more support available to reduce home energy use. This year, Energy Trust of Oregon, a nonprofit that helps people, businesses, and organizations use less energy, is offering cash incentives that, combined with new federal tax credits, make it easier to make energy-saving changes at home—Scott Leonard, *East Oregonian*, June 3, 2024: https://www.eastoregonian.com/sponsored/home-energy-spotlight-save-more-in-2024-by-combining-tax-credits-and-energy-trust-incentives/article_5f875f74-1f71-11ef-b1b4-6737634791bf.html

Washington State News

Lacey Receives SolSmart Silver Designation for Solar Energy Leadership

The City of Lacey (City) recently received a Silver designation from SolSmart for encouraging the growth of clean, affordable solar energy at the local level. This national program helps local governments reduce barriers to solar energy use for residents and businesses...Lacey achieved a SolSmart Silver designation by training staff on best practices for permitting solar energy and solar-plus storage systems. In addition, the City established codes that allow homeowners throughout Lacey to install solar panels on their roofs—City of Lacey, *Thurston Talk*, April 19, 2024: <https://www.thurstontalk.com/2024/04/19/lacey-receives-solsmart-silver-designation-for-solar-energy-leadership/>

New Federal Funds Will Help Thousands in Washington Get Solar Panels for Free

Washington state will receive \$156 million in federal funds for new programs to install rooftop solar on thousands of homes and apartment buildings, and to expand access to solar energy in tribal communities... The money is a slice of \$7 billion in grants nationwide the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Monday through its Solar For All program, which aims to make solar energy more

available and affordable for low- and moderate-income Americans—Jerry Cornfield, *Washington State Standard*, April 22, 2024: <https://washingtonstatestandard.com/briefs/new-federal-funds-will-help-thousands-in-washington-get-solar-power-for-free/>

Puget Sound Energy Family Support Center of South Sound Celebrate New Solar Array

Puget Sound Energy and the [Family Support Center of South Sound](#) are hosting a ribbon cutting to celebrate a new solar array installation, made possible in part by PSE's Green Power Solar Grant program... This grant helped Family Support Center of South Sound install a 50.20-kilowatt solar array on its new 62-unit permanent housing facility with a supportive services project. The solar array is estimated to generate more than 55,000 kilowatt-hours a year, which will help them focus less on their utility bill and more on serving the community—Puget Sound Energy, [Press Release], April 26, 2024: <https://www.pse.com/en/press-release/details/Puget-Sound-Energy-Family-Support-Center-of-South-Sound-celebrate-new-solar-array>

EFSEC Releases Findings on Horse Heaven Energy Proposal

The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council released Monday the conclusions members drew from an eight-day hearing last summer on the proposed Horse Heaven wind and solar project in southeast Washington... The project, up to 222 turbines and more than 5,000 acres of solar panels, would transform the scenic Horse Heaven Hills in Benton County, but would help combat climate change, the council concluded—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, May 1, 2024: [Click here to read more](#).

REC Silicon to Ship Polysilicon from Moses Lake Plant in Q2

US polysilicon manufacturer REC Silicon expects to ship the first solar-grade polysilicon from its Moses Lake, Washington facility by the end of June... In a public statement, the company said that it “continues its ramp-up activities by improving, optimizing, and increasing the production capacity at the Moses Lake facility”. Full operational production at the site is expected by the end of 2024, with the first shipment expected before the end of Q2—Will Norman, *pvt-tech*, May 2, 2024: <https://www.pvt-tech.org/rec-silicon-to-ship-polysilicon-from-moses-lake-plant-in-q2/>

Residents Asked to Give Input on Impacts of Rural Clean Energy Development

The state is seeking input from residents of rural Washington communities with an interest in how the development of large or community-scale solar, wind, and other types of clean energy projects may affect the community... The public is invited to join conversations that will help inform the Rural Clean Energy Economics and Community Engagement Study and Report being prepared under the direction of the Washington State Department of Commerce—KXRO News Radio, May 8, 2024: https://www.kxro.com/residents-asked-to-give-input-on-impacts-of-rural-clean-energy-development/?utm_medium=email

Construction on Solar Power Project Near Moxee is Ahead of Schedule

Those traveling from Yakima County to the Tri-Cities area via State Route 24 will get a good glimpse at what the future of electricity production could look like in Central Washington... The majority of panels for the Goose Prairie Solar project, located roughly 8 miles east of Moxee, have been erected this spring, and the project could begin full operation as soon as Sept. 30, developers said this week... Brookfield Renewable plans to begin energization of the site on June 18, ramp up production to

90% sometime in late July or early August, then receive a final sign-off on the project on or about Sept. 30, Crist told the EFSEC board—Joel Donofrio, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, May 20, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

City First in State to Implement Solar Permit Software Program

The City of Spokane has become the first city in Washington to launch a [pilot project](#) involving an online software platform for local governments to standardize, streamline and automate the solar permitting process for residential applications... [Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus](#) (SolarAPP+) allows for an instantaneous permit application review, reducing wait times for residential rooftop solar systems by at least two weeks—Brian Walker, City of Spokane, [Press Release], May 21, 2023: [Click here to read more.](#)

Inslee Rejects Recommendation to Shrink Footprint of Massive Wind Farm

The future of one of the largest wind farms ever proposed in Washington got a boost Thursday as Gov. Jay Inslee told a state panel it went too far downsizing the project... Last month, the state's energy facility siting panel sent Inslee [its recommendation for approval](#) of the Horse Heaven wind and solar project. It contained a raft of conditions that slashed the number of turbines in the Benton County project in half to curb threats to tribal cultural resources and endangered hawks... Inslee on Thursday [directed](#) the [Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council](#) to revisit its decision and focus mitigation on "specific and narrowly tailored approaches" that will enable the wind farm "to achieve its full or near-full energy generation capacity"—Jerry Cornfield, *Washington State Standard*, May 23, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Inslee Sends Horse Heaven Power Project Recommendation Back to Site Council

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on May 23 directed the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council to reconsider its proposed restrictions on the Horse Heaven wind and solar project in southeast Washington. Inslee's order came three days after Scout Clean Energy formally appealed to EFSEC or Inslee to ease the restrictions to allow more wind turbines and solar panels on rolling hills near the Tri-Cities—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, May 23, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Climate Commitment Act Dollars at Work: Commerce Awards \$7.5 Million to Five Tribes for Clean Energy Projects

The Washington State Department of Commerce this week announced \$7.5 million in grants to five tribes in Washington to plan, design and build clean energy projects. Funded by Washington's [Climate Commitment Act](#), these [clean energy grants through Commerce](#) are part of an \$83 million opportunity that includes \$16 million for a targeted tribal clean energy fund and \$67 million for projects that advance environmental justice and equity—Clean Energy, Washington State Department of Commerce, [Press Release], May 28, 2024: https://www.commerce.wa.gov/news/climate-commitment-act-dollars-at-work-commerce-awards-7-5-million-to-five-tribes-for-clean-energy-projects/?utm_medium=email

Inslee: Hawks Not in Way of Horse Heaven Power Project

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has dismissed ferruginous hawks as an obstacle to the Horse Heaven wind and solar project, embracing the position of Scout Clean Energy and disregarding the advice of state wildlife biologists... Inslee last week rejected the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council's recommendation to prohibit turbines within 2 miles of 63 historic ferruginous hawk nests in or near the

project boundary in southeast Washington—Don Jenkins, *Capital Press*, May 29, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Cowlitz Tribe among Groups Awarded Millions from State for Clean-Energy Projects

*The Washington Department of Commerce awarded more than \$47 million in clean-energy grants to Southwest Washington cities, counties, public utilities and recognized tribes in two separate rounds of awards late last week... The Cowlitz Indian Tribe received \$1.7 million to build a 100-kilowatt solar array and battery energy storage system on its administrative and clinic buildings. The arrays will power the buildings and provide supplemental power for electric vehicle charging—Shari Phiel, *The Columbian*, June 4, 2024: <https://www.columbian.com/news/2024/jun/04/cowlitz-tribe-among-groups-awarded-millions-from-state-for-clean-energy-projects/>*

National News

What Is Solar Leasing? Here's What You Should Know

If you want to enjoy the many benefits of utilizing solar energy to power your home but are concerned about costs, solar leasing may be a great option for you. To explore whether solar leasing is right for you, it's important to know what leasing provides and more importantly, how it works.

In essence, this choice affords solar power users the opportunity to maximize the savings by securing access to and usage of the equipment needed to provide solar energy for their home, for a fixed monthly charge. Leasing can offer a way to finance the purchase of solar panels without breaking the bank—Samantha Hunter, *Forbes*, April 23, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

America Exceeds Five Million Solar Installations Nationwide

The United States has officially exceeded five million solar installations, marking a significant achievement in the nation's clean energy transition. This milestone comes just eight years after the U.S. reached one million installations in 2016 — a milestone that took 40 years to achieve following the first grid-connected solar installation in 1973... According to data released by the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and Wood Mackenzie today, over half of all U.S. solar installations have come online since the start of 2020 and over 25% have come online since the Inflation Reduction Act became law just 20 months ago—SEIA, [Press Release], May 16, 2024: [Click here to read more.](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$71 Million Investment to Advance American Solar Manufacturing and Development as Part of Investing in America Agenda

As part of President Biden's Investing in America [agenda](#), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced a \$71 million investment, including \$16 million from the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, in research, development, and demonstration projects to grow the network of domestic manufacturers across the U.S. solar energy supply chain. The selected projects will address gaps in the domestic solar manufacturing capacity for supply chain including equipment, silicon ingots and wafers, and both silicon and thin-film solar cell manufacturing—United States, DOE, EERE, [Press Release], May 16, 2024: <https://www.energy.gov/articles/biden-harris-administration-announces-71-million-investment-advance-american-solar>

DOE offers \$10.5M for Microgrids in Underserved, Indigenous Communities

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Electricity (OE) announced selectees of about \$10.5 million in funding to support multi-year research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) of microgrid-related technologies... This funding is meant to help bring replicable microgrid solutions to underserved and indigenous communities in remote, rural, and islanded regions throughout the United States—Sean Wolfe, *Power Grid International*, May 22, 2024: <https://www.power-grid.com/news/doe-offers-10-5m-for-microgrids-in-underserved-indigenous-communities/>

Upcoming Conferences, Events and Webinars

Solar Washington Webinar Series: Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar (Webinars are 12:00-12:45 pm)

Solar Washington, as an independent, education-oriented nonprofit association, offers unbiased, objective information to aid your decision-making process via a series of free, concise lunchtime webinars in June. Watch the presentations and ask your questions on- or off-line.

- [Understanding Incentives and Solar Financing Options](#) – June 7
- [Getting and Reviewing Solar Quotes](#) – June 11
- [What's Happens Next?](#) – June 14
- [Electrify Your Home](#) – June 18

For more information and to register (free), click on the individual links above or go to: [/www.solarwa.org/solar_washington_webinar](http://www.solarwa.org/solar_washington_webinar)

Solar at Portland Public Schools : Free Webinar June 6, 12:00 PM

Join us for an insightful webinar exploring the transformative potential of solar power in public schools. In this free virtual event, the lead energy and sustainability manager of Portland Public Schools will discuss integrating solar energy systems into educational institutions. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

AgriVoltaics World Conference : Denver, CO, June 11-13

The AgriVoltaics World Conference, now in its 5th year and spanning all five continents, provides high-level scientific exchange and great networking opportunities. It unites the global community working on dual-use solutions in the belief that agrivoltaics at multiple scales can help build food-energy-water resilience: [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Community Solar Innovation Summit : Denver, CO, June 13-14

This year, the Coalition and Community Solar Access (CCSA) and our members are launching the inaugural Community Solar Innovation Summit. This is CCSA's first self-hosted conference and 100% of Summit revenues will be invested back into opening, expanding, and protecting competitive, sustainable community solar markets: [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

GridTECH Connect Forum : Newport Beach CA, June 24-26

GridTECH Connect is focused on both DER and utility-scale interconnection. The conference covers community solar, battery energy storage, virtual power plants, microgrids, integrated resource planning, policy and regulation, and more: [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

ACP Recharge: Energy Storage Summit : Portland, OR, June 26-28

Join the major players in energy storage as we aim to make American energy more reliable, efficient and affordable. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

2024 Solar Farm Summit : Rosemont IL, July 8-10, 2024

Dig into all things agrivoltaics at the 2nd annual Solar Farm Summit landing once again next to O'Hare International Airport in the heart of North America's heartland for 3 difference-making days of instructive, illuminating and inspiring dual-use development programming July 8-10, 2024! For more information and to register: [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.](#)

2024 Washington State Solar Summit : Shoreline Community College : Oct 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.](#)

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