



March 7, 2025

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Oregon News

Iberdrola and Portland General Electric Partner on 120 MW Tower Solar Project in Oregon

Iberdrola, through its U.S. subsidiary Avangrid, has signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Portland General Electric (PGE) for the 120 Maw Tower Solar project in Morrow County, Oregon. Developed in partnership with QTS and Meta, the project will create over 200 jobs and become Avangrid's sixth solar facility in Oregon upon its completion in 2026. This marks the company's 17th power generation project in the state, where it already operates 1,600 MW of wind and solar capacity—Tina Dasgupta, *Solar Quarter*, Jan 7, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Empowering Affordable Housing with Energy Efficiency and Solar

A new affordable housing development in Portland is tackling critical challenges like homelessness, addiction recovery and climate resilience. Developed by Central City Concern, a nonprofit dedicated to helping Oregonians overcome homelessness, Meridian Gardens will provide housing and supportive services for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, while receiving treatment for substance use disorders... Meridian Gardens features energy-saving technologies like high-efficiency heat pumps, which will provide residents with comfortable living spaces year-round while also reducing energy use. A solar array, supported by a \$75,000 incentive from Energy Trust of Oregon that covered more than 60% of the installation costs, is projected to generate more than 63,000 kilowatt-hours annually of clean energy onsite, saving approximately \$10,000 a year in utility costs—Energy Trust of Oregon, *Blog*, Jan 15, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Visit this Off-Grid, Solar-Powered Winery Outside Dufur

The eastern side of Wasco County in central Oregon is known as wheat country. But it also, surprisingly, has a bit of wine country. Four miles northeast of Dufur — down gravel roads so rural, Apple Maps gets confused — you can visit [Shadowbuck Farm](#), a 100% off-grid vineyard and winery—Samantha Swindler, *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, Jan 31, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

States Aim to Cut Energy Costs for Low-Income Households with Community Solar Projects (Interview on NPR)

A MARTÍNEZ, HOST: Some states are trying to lower electricity costs for low-income households through community solar projects. These allow people to use a portion of renewable energy from a shared system. Here's Monica Samayoa from Oregon Public Broadcasting. MONICA SAMAYOA, BYLINE: Carlos Interian (ph) lives with his family in an apartment complex in a northeast Portland neighborhood—Monica Samayoa, *NPR Morning Edition*, Feb 12, 2025: [Click here to read more and/or to listen to transcript.](#)

Oregon's Community Solar Program in Danger of Dying without Changes, Backers Say

Portland will soon see the launch of its first full-sized community solar project nearly a decade after the Legislature approved the statewide program to provide clean energy and help low-income ratepayers at the same time. But it may be the last one in the city unless supporters convince lawmakers to expand and improve the program, beset by delays, recalcitrant power companies and limits on capacity—Gosia Wozniacka, *OregonLive*, Mar 3, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

Distributed Energy Resources in Oregon and Washington

Distributed energy resources (DERs) play an increasingly vital role in modernizing energy systems and achieving sustainability goals. Regulatory frameworks and policy priorities in both Oregon and Washington facilitate the integration of DERs into the grid. This article provides a general overview of the regulatory scheme that governs DERs in Oregon and Washington, and highlights key programs and policies that promote their development and integration. Such practices include revised interconnection rules, emerging battery energy storage initiatives, and community solar programs—Sara Sayles, Dylan Sollfrank, *JD Supra*, Mar 4, 2025: [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.

What's Next for Renewable Energy in San Juan County: Part 3 of 3

The Bailer Hill Microgrid project on San Juan Island is a future community solar and battery storage site... OPALCO has a long history as a cooperative serving our island communities, including moving from small diesel generators for our electrical needs to installing submarine cables to deliver power. Our island communities are at a point where we need to rally together and figure out our future energy

supply. It's time to start thinking differently than we have before and work together to find solutions to these big issues to ensure these essential services are accessible and reliable... OPALCO has been working for four years to site, plan, permit and construct the Bailer Hill microgrid. The process started with a preliminary application which did not flag any unusual issues. OPALCO worked for the next 18 months to design, study and engineer the project to submit for a conditional use permit for this site—Orcas Power & Light Cooperative, *Newsroom*, Jan 28, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Paid Job Training in Washington Propels Young Adults into Clean Energy Jobs

A new program is putting young adults in Washington in hands-on paid training programs that lead to full-time jobs in the clean energy field. Eighteen to 24-year-olds are among the newest members of the workforce including electricians, solar and wind technicians, and more. The program pays the first 240 hours of wages for JumpStart workers at local businesses and companies. Thanks to federal funding, JumpStart will become a four-county region program including King, Pierce, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties. It's expected to run through at least 2030—Farah Jadram, *King5 News*, Feb 10, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

\$156M Solar Power Grant Reopened for Washington Amid Federal Funding Turmoil

Washington has regained access to more than \$150 million in previously frozen federal funds for solar energy projects, state officials said... For at least a week, the state Department of Commerce was locked out of its [Solar for All grant money](#) expected to help thousands of residents in low-income communities access solar power. The money was part of \$7 billion the federal Environmental Protection Agency awarded last year to 60 recipients nationwide—Jake Goldstein-Street, *Washington State Standard*, Feb 11, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Another Yakima County Solar Project to Begin Construction

Construction is set to begin next week at a solar energy project in northeast Yakima County, while another recently completed project may add storage batteries in the near future. The updates were discussed Wednesday during the state Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council's monthly meeting. EFSEC staff member Sara Randolph told the board that construction of the 80-megawatt Ostrea solar project will begin Monday, Feb. 24. The project near the Silver Dollar Café, just west of the State Route 24 and SR 241 intersection in the county's northeast corner, was approved with the adjacent High Top solar facility in April 2023—Joel Donofrio (Yakima Herald-Republic), *The Spokesman-Review*, Feb 21, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Deming Library Receives Solar Panel Grant

Thanks to an \$82,470 grant from the state's Clean Energy Fund, the Deming Library on Mt. Baker Highway will have solar panels installed on its roof next month... Friends of the Deming Library applied for the grant, which is supported by Washington's Climate Commitment Act. Board member and Deming resident Leaf Schumann said the nonprofit is thrilled to see the project come to life and is grateful for the support from the Clean Energy Fund... Locally owned solar provider Ecotech Solar is set to begin installation on March 4. The 80 panels should help the library reduce its energy costs by around \$5,000 per year—Julia Tellman, *Cascadia Daily*, Feb 21, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

New Yakima County Solar Project Starts Construction Soon

Yakima County is set to witness another significant leap toward renewable energy with the upcoming construction of the Ostrea solar project. Scheduled to commence on February 24, 2025, this ambitious initiative aims to harness solar power through an array of photovoltaic panels installed across a sprawling area—Oliver Townsend, Solar Cell USA, Feb. 21, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

La Conner School District Approves Contract for Solar on School Buildings

The La Conner School Board approved Monday contracts with A&R Solar to install solar equipment on the school district's elementary and middle school buildings. The contracts include a photovoltaic system, battery energy storage system, and 10 years of maintenance at La Conner Middle School, and a smaller photovoltaic system and 10 years of maintenance at La Conner Elementary School... According to a study by Cascadia Renewables, the middle school project is expected to generate about 45% of the middle school's required energy. It will be capable of storing energy that would last about 17 hours in winter and 2.25 days in summer—Emma Fletcher-Frazer, *Skagit Valley Herald*, Feb 25, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

CWU Completes Dugmore Hall Solar Panel Installation with Help from an Alum

As part of Central Washington University's comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CAP), the entirety of the Ellensburg campus is being assessed for solar viability... Now that all of the available structures and properties have been identified, a campus-wide solar development plan is in the works to help CWU lower our overall carbon footprint... Earlier this month, crews completed the installation of a 100-kilowatt solar array on the roof of Dugmore Hall, CWU's newest residence hall—Tune Torgersen, *Central Washington University News*, Feb 26, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

Ostrea Solar Project Construction Begins Amid County Moratorium

Construction on the Ostrea solar project commenced on Monday, despite Yakima County's moratorium on solar projects. The project is expected to be completed by the summer of 2026—Malorie Aldrich, KIMA TV, Feb 26, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

Puget Sound Energy Awards Nearly \$1 Million in Solar Installation Grants

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is expanding its Solar Grant program to new heights with more than \$1 million in awards this year given throughout our service territory. PSE has worked with local organizations and Tribes for nearly a decade, awarding an average of more than \$700,000. This year, however, PSE increased the total awards amount to \$1,127,961 spread out among 14 recipients. The additional funds come from PSE's Clean Energy Implementation Plan, which will increase the amount of clean electricity in its portfolio to more than 60 percent by 2025. Part of this plan includes energy efficiency programs such as our Solar Grant program—Puget Sound Energy, [Press Release], Mar 3, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

Greater Pacific Northwest and National News

Community Solar Still a Bright Spot Amid Trump Turmoil

President Trump sailed into office with big ideas for tilting federal energy policy in favor of fossil fuels, but gaping holes are already beginning to appear in the plans. One of those holes is the community solar movement, which is still gathering steam with the nation's #1 fast food chain among its growing legion of fans—Tina Casey, *Clean Technica*, Jan 23, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

How Microgrid, Storage and Solar Companies are Responding to President Trump's 10% Tariffs on Chinese Goods

In response to President Trump's new 10% tariffs on Chinese goods, microgrid, battery storage and solar companies say they are working to source their materials outside of China, manufacture components in the U.S., keep projects on track and create more certainty for their customers. They also said that the tariffs may slow but will not stop the renewable energy industry's momentum—Lisa Cohn, Microgrid Knowledge, Feb 17 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Community Solar Installations Increased by 35% in 2024

The United States community solar market installed a record-breaking 1.7 GW_{DC} of capacity in 2024, a 35% increase from 2023, according to a [new report](#) released by Wood Mackenzie in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA). However, with policy uncertainty at both national and state levels, long-term growth hangs in the balance—Kelsey Misbrener, *Solar Power World*, Feb 19, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Guidelines For Registered Apprenticeship Programs For The US Solar Industry Approved By DOL

In a major step toward strengthening the renewable energy workforce, the US Department of Labor (DOL) has approved national guidelines for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the solar industry. The new standards, developed by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), aim to create a structured and standardized pathway for training and certifying solar technicians across the country—Derek Markham, *Clean Technica*, Feb 25, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Trump Energy Policy Changes Signal Major Industry Shifts in 2025 and Beyond

There has been significant outrage from the left around changes the Trump administration has made since taking office, including actions that specifically affect the power industry. Yet, it's not uncommon for an administration to make energy policy changes after a new president assumes power. Some change is normal—Aaron Larson, *Power*, Mar 3, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

EPA Unfreezes \$7 Billion solar for ALL Grant Program

The \$7 billion Solar for All program has been unfrozen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) following a White House mandate to review of Biden-era climate spending. "EPA worked expeditiously to enable payment accounts for [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act] and [Inflation Reduction Act] grant recipients, so funding is now accessible to all recipients," the EPA wrote in a statement Tuesday—Rachel Metea, *pv magazine*, Mar 4, 2025: [Click here to read more](#).

Agrivoltaics

Booming Solar Farms Employ Sheep to Keep Vegetation in Check

On rural Texas farmland, beneath hundreds of rows of solar panels, a troop of stocky sheep rummage through pasture, casually bumping into one another as they remain committed to a single task: chewing grass... The booming solar industry has found an unlikely mascot in sheep as large-scale solar farms crop up across the U.S. and in the plain fields of Texas. In Milam County, outside Austin, SB Energy operates the fifth-largest solar project in the country, capable of generating 900 megawatts of power across 4,000 acres... How do they manage all that grass? With the help of about 3,000 sheep, which are better suited than lawnmowers to fit between small crevices and chew away rain or shine—Nadia Lath, *Associated Press/Report for America*, Feb 18, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

US Farmers Switch to Renting Out Sheep as Lawn Mowers for Solar Sites

For the first time in four generations, the Raines family didn't plant a single cotton seed last year. Chad Raines parked his tractor and rented out most of his Texas farmland to a neighbor. Instead of plowing fields, Raines spent the year ferrying his flock of sheep to solar farms, to munch on the grass that grows around the gleaming panels. The deals he struck for this natural lawn-mowing service with five solar companies were more lucrative than growing cotton, he said—P.J. Huffstutter, *Reuters*, Mar 3, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

American Farmland Trust Makes Policy Recommendations for Agrivoltaics

In the United States, up to 83% of new solar development by 2040 is forecast to occur on farmland and ranchland, according to the American Farmland Trust. This highlights the need to build solar on rooftops, brownfields, and already-developed lands, while also presenting the opportunity for building agrivoltaics... The American Farmland Trust made policy recommendations to support more agrivoltaic buildout, which it said currently represents less than 5% of solar capacity installed in the U.S. It first set out to create a clear definition of what qualifies as an agrivoltaic project, and recommended incentive structures for qualified projects—Ryan Kennedy, *pv magazine*, Mar 5, 2025: [Click here to read more.](#)

Reports

Consolidated Billing Makes Community Solar Easier for Consumers

As community solar grows nationwide, customers sometimes face a confusing situation – getting a bill from their community solar provider and a separate bill from their utility. Customers have to do their own math to calculate the savings from their subscription... In other cases, utilities and community solar companies have joined forces to provide a single bill, with all charges and credits consolidated. Single bills provide increased transparency, improved customer experience, and, ultimately, increased retention rates and decreased subscriber acquisition costs—Energy Markets & Policy, Berkeley Lab, Report, [Abstract], Jan 10, 2025: [Click here to read more and access report.](#)

Optimizing Energy Resilience to Support Medically Vulnerable Residents in Multifamily Affordable Housing

This report outlines opportunities for solar paired with battery storage to maintain electricity to essential services, both in-unit and in communal spaces, at multifamily affordable housing facilities. In addition to evaluating the health benefits of energy resilience in the event of an outage, the report explores potential economic benefits for both the provider and residents during regular grid operations—*Solar+Storage News*, Feb 21, 2025: [Click here to read more](#). See associated webinar *Energy Resilience for medically Vulnerable Multifamily Affordable Housing Residents* April 10. [Click here for more info and to register](#).

Upcoming Conferences and Webinars

New PacifiCorp Battery Storage Incentive Program Webinar: Mar 26

Pacific Power was just approved to operationalize a demand response program specific for battery energy storage systems in Oregon (and Washington)! The utility will host a webinar to outline the details of the program as well as respond to questions and comments from trade allies, battery manufacturers and interested customers. It is called the Wattsmart Battery Program and follows the successful model that has been supporting the battery storage industry in PacifiCorp's Rocky Mountain Power service area for several years. The webinar will be held on Wednesday, March 26th, from 2-3pm, on Microsoft Teams. Be sure to attend to learn about:

- Wattsmart Battery Program design and battery system dispatch use cases
- Upfront customer incentives upon enrollment and ongoing annual incentives provided as bill credits
- Battery systems eligible for participation in the program
- What an installer or battery manufacturer will need to do in order to get the most out of Wattsmart

To receive an email invitation to the webinar, please express interest by sending an email to WattsmartBattery@pacificpower.net. For information about the program, see the webpage: [Wattsmart Battery Program](#).

Olympia Community Solar Upcoming Solarize Events

Learn more about how solar energy works, solar incentives, and what to expect from a Solarize program. Solarize campaigns are designed to encourage community members to switch to solar energy by addressing common barriers to its adoption. Typically organized by local governments, energy committees, or third-party organizations, these campaigns offer group discounts on installations, access to informational resources, and support throughout the process for participants.

- Solarize Eastside Workshop (Issaquah) – Mar 29
- Solarize Eastside Workshop (Bellevue) – Apr 2
- Solarize Eastside Workshop (Remond) – Apr 3
- Solarize Eastside Workshop (Mercer Island) – Apr 5
- Solarize Eastside Workshop (Kirkland) – Apr 8
- Solarize Kenmore Workshop – Apr 10
- Solarize Skagit Workshop – Apr 10

- Solarize Whatcom Workshop – Apr 14
- Solarize Island County Workshop – Apr 17
- Solarize Eastside Workshop (Sammamish) – Apr 23

[Click here for more detailed information](#) on the workshops listed above.

Microgrid Knowledge 2025, Dallas, TX Apr 15-17

Explore the latest trends, technologies, and strategies shaping the future of resilient and sustainable power. From expert insights to hands-on case studies, this is the must-attend event for professionals driving the energy transition. [Click here for more information.](#)

Spring 2025 Clean & Affordable Energy Conference: Missoula, May 7

Join the NW Energy Coalition this spring in Missoula for our Clean & Affordable Energy Conference! [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Oregon Solar + Storage Conference: May 13-15

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

Northwest: Tacoma, WA, Jun 11-12

Meet with regional and national companies, understand cutting-edge policy, trends, and know-how, and connect with colleagues from your region. [Click here for more information.](#)

2025 Community Solar Innovation Summit: Denver, CO, June 26-27

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

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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