



January 7, 2021

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

Solar Within Reach Marks Participation Milestone

More than 50 income-qualified homeowners across Oregon have installed solar energy systems to help power their homes with help from Energy Trust's Solar Within Reach incentive since the offer launched in late 2019. [Solar Within Reach](#) was Energy Trust's first solar offer for income-qualified households. Customers who meet income qualifications are eligible to receive increased incentives—currently up to five times higher than Energy Trust's standard solar incentives—when they install solar on their homes—Energy Trust of Oregon, Nov. 25, 2020: <https://blog.energytrust.org/solar-within-reach-marks-participation-milestone/>

Final Revisions to the Oregon Community Solar Program Implementation Manual

For your reference, the following version of the Program Implementation Manual includes the final redlines resulting from comments we received from and meetings we held with Project Managers, stakeholders, and the utilities in Q4 2020—Oregon Community Solar Program, Jan. 4, 2021: <https://www.oregoncsp.org/p/News>

Commissioners OK Solar Farm Lease

A lease on 2.5 acres of land just outside of Enterprise was approved by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners for a long-planned solar farm by Ryan Sheehy's Fleet Development. The commissioners recessed to executive session on the advice of Paige Sully, the county counsel, to discuss the lease. After returning to regular session, the commissioners approved the lease. It's part of Oregon's new Community Solar Program. Although the program was created by the Legislature in 2016, this project is likely to be the first solar project to pass through the extensive certification requirements of the

program—Bill Bradshaw, *Wallowa County Chieftain*, Dec. 22, 2020:

https://www.wallowa.com/news/commissioners-ok-solar-farm-lease/article_0c285a6a-4165-11eb-bb2c-4b07d763e5ab.html

Filling the Void

Driving south on Highway 19 from Arlington on the Columbia River, the road climbs steadily through rolling hills. After only a few miles, the road reaches the Columbia plateau, where dryland wheat farms stretch as far as the eye can see. Marion Weatherford owns a wheat farm on the plateau close to where his family has been farming for five generations—Nick Cunningham, *Oregon Business*, Dec. 15, 2020:

<https://www.oregonbusiness.com/article/energy-environment/item/19220-filling-the-void>

Washington

Washington State Energy Efficiency and Solar Grants

The application period for the Washington State Energy Efficiency Grant Program is now open. Applications are due by January 29, 2021. Eligible applicants include Washington State local agencies, public higher education institutions, public school districts, state agencies, and federally recognized tribal governments. Priority for awards will be given to projects that leverage a higher percentage of non-state funds, projects with higher energy savings, and first-time applicants. More information may be found at the Washington State Department of Commerce website:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/energy-efficiency-and-solar-grants/>

What Will a Green WA Electric Grid Look Like?

Power used to be pretty simple for utility companies: build a coal plant or dam, run transmission wires and some substations and customers flip a light switch. But the pressures of electric vehicles and climate change are quickly pushing electric grids to evolve, and Washington state and utility providers are grappling with the best way to move forward—Aaron Kunkler, *Seattle Weekly*, Dec. 10, 2020:

<https://www.seattleweekly.com/news/what-will-a-green-wa-electric-grid-look-like/>

Rainshadow Solar Installs Solar Panels at Eastsound Suites

Eastsound Suites on Main Street is the latest Orcas business to begin generating their own electricity. Orcas-based installer, Rainshadow Solar, completed installation earlier this month of 34 PV panels on the building's cross gable roof. The 13.4 kW system is expected to generate more than 14,000 kWh of clean energy annually — producing nearly 75% of Eastsound Suites' annual energy use—*The Islands' Sounder*, Dec. 23, 2020: <https://www.islandssouder.com/life/rainshadow-solar-installs-solar-panels-at-eastsound-suites-paid-column/>

Solar Industry

Solar Investment Tax Credit Extended at 26% for Two Additional Years

Extended renewable energy tax credits have been included in a \$1.4 trillion federal spending package alongside a \$900 billion COVID-19 virus relief spending bill. The solar investment tax credit (ITC), which was scheduled to drop from 26% to 22% in 2021, will stay at 26% for two more years. The wind industry also received a limited extension of its production tax credit. This means that solar projects in all market segments — residential, commercial, industrial, utility-scale — that begin construction in 2021 and 2022

will still be able to receive a tax credit at 26%—Kelly Pickerel, *Solar Power World*, Dec. 21, 2020: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2020/12/solar-investment-tax-credit-extended-at-26-for-two-additional-years/>

A No-Brainer for U.S. Job Creation: Update Solar Permitting and Inspections

Solar is big enough now that its soft costs are a real drag on local economic activity. Soft costs in the U.S. defy the example of other countries that install solar at one-third the cost because of how the steps that drive soft costs have been structured—Yann Brandt and Mike Casey, *pV magazine*, Jan. 1, 2021: <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2021/01/01/a-no-brainer-for-u-s-job-creation-update-solar-permitting-and-inspections/>

Solar Recycling

PV Module Recycling Could Harm US Solar Industry

The solar industry cannot claim to be a clean energy source if it leaves a trail of hazardous waste. But, absent a cogent PV recycling policy, the United States risks sending millions of solar modules and tons of toxics to landfill in the coming years. A new initiative by Recycle PV Solar seeks to address this problem—Becky Beetz and Eric Wesoff, *pV magazine*, Dec. 7, 2020: <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2020/12/07/pv-module-recycling-could-harm-us-solar-industry/>

No 'Green Halo' for Renewables: First Solar, Veolia, Others Tackle Wind and Solar Environmental Impacts

Renewables are vaunted for their ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of the push to address climate change in the United States and elsewhere, but that doesn't mean they have zero environmental impact. Projections from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) show the share of renewable generation increasing from 18% in 2018 to 31% in the U.S. by 2050—Lynn Freehill-Maye, *Utility Dive*, Dec. 14, 2020: <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/no-green-halo-for-renewables-first-solar-veolia-others-tackle-wind-and/589249/>

Solar Panel Recycling: What's the Plan?

Solar energy is now cheaper than coal and natural gas in most nations, according to an October 2020 report from the International Energy Agency. Decreasing costs for solar photovoltaics (PV), along with efforts to minimize non-hardware costs, help explain the increased solar capacity coming online to the electric grid. But as solar continues to grow, in addition to the existing solar PV capacity in the United States, those panels will eventually reach the end of their useful life. What will happen then? —National Association of Home Builders, Dec. 29, 2020: <http://nahbnow.com/2020/12/solar-panel-recycling-whats-the-plan/>

Agrivoltaics

Combining Solar Energy and Agriculture to Mitigate Climate Change, Assist Rural Communities

Co-developing land for both solar photovoltaic power and agriculture could provide 20% of total electricity generation in the United States with an investment of less than 1% of the annual U.S. budget, a new paper by Oregon State University researchers found. To read more and access the report—Mirage, Jan. 5, 2021: <https://www.miragenews.com/combining-solar-energy-and-agriculture->

[to-mitigate-climate-change-assist-rural-communities/](#)

See also: **Agrivoltaic Systems: Combining Solar Energy and Agriculture to Mitigate Climate Change, Assist Rural Communities**

- Wide-scale installation of agrivoltaic systems could lead to an annual reduction of 330,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S.
- Oregon State University researchers say co-locating solar and agriculture could provide 20 percent of U.S electricity generation.
- Using an investment of less than 1 percent of the annual U.S budget.

Editorial staff, *pvbuzz*, Jan. 6, 2021: <https://pvbuzz.com/agrivoltaic-systems-solar-energy-and-agriculture-mitigate-climate-change/>

Upcoming Conferences, Webinars, etc.

Solar Washington Presentation: Working in Solar-Installer: Friday, January 15, 2021 12:00 PM

Join Solar Washington in this first in a series of presentations in 2021 focusing on workforce development in the solar industry. This presentation, scheduled for Friday, January 15 at 12:00 noon (Pacific) and titled, Working in Solar: Job Types at a Solar Installer, will outline the types of positions commonly found within a solar installation company. From design, installation, finance to marketing and more, Solar Washington Board member Kevin Moens (also of A&R Solar) will provide an overview of positions, needed skills, education and more. For more info and to register:

https://www.solarwa.org/january_2021_solar_washington_presentation_working_in_solar_installer

Solar+Storage Fire Safety Training: Single and Multifamily Residential: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 10:00 AM PT

The solar PV and battery storage industry in the United States is rapidly growing, with more systems being installed each year. As with any technology, solar PV and battery storage systems are not without safety concerns. Although battery system failures are rare, firefighters need to be prepared when something unexpected does happen or a fire occurs where batteries are located. Unfortunately, battery storage safety training opportunities are limited. This webinar, hosted by Clean Energy Group, focuses on solar and battery response safety for single and multifamily residential projects. For more information and to register: <https://www.cesa.org/event/solarstorage-fire-safety-training/>

Blueprint for Clean Energy: January 13, 2021, 9:00 AM: PT

The Blueprint for Clean Energy team is excited to host Steph Speirs (BA '13), Co-founder and CEO of Solstice. Please join us for an exciting conversation with Steph as we discuss community solar and clean energy equity for all. Solstice offers a turnkey solution for the community solar industry. Steph and her team educate and connect communities to solar gardens, create financial innovations that expand access to all Americans, and provide a seamless digital platform for community solar Yale Center for Business and the Environment. To register see:

https://yale.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AjHEwEJCRT6sqRw3Vj4PUw

Solar Washington Presentation: Working in Solar-Utility: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 12:00 PM

Join Solar Washington in this presentation scheduled for Tuesday, February 2 at 12:00 noon (Pacific)

and titled, *Working in Solar: Job Types and Functions at a Utility*. Solar Washington welcomes Bart Hansen of Clark PUD and Suzy Oversvee of Snohomish PUD (both of whom are Solar Washington Board members), who will talk about solar energy and how it applies when working at a utility. For more info and to RSVP see: <https://www.solarwa.org/calendar>

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

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