



**April 2, 2020**

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>

**To Everyone in our Solar Community  
We hope that you and yours are safe and well.**

---

## **Oregon News**

### **Redland Solar Project gets \$279K from PGE**

A telecommunications company based in the Redland area of unincorporated Oregon City is receiving \$278,896 from PGE's Renewable Development Fund. Clear Creek Communications has used the money to install two solar arrays on the company's Fischers Mill Road property. Officials expect that by this spring, the project will generate nearly 110 kilowatts of solar energy to offset 25% of Clear Creek's overall power requirement. Clear Creek, which invested \$49,546 in the project, also was awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Oregon Public Utility Commission to aid in the installation with a total budget of nearly 110 kilowatts of solar energy to offset 25% of Clear Creek's overall power requirement. Read more at — Raymond Rendleman, *Portland Tribune*, March 12, 2020:

<https://www.newsbreak.com/news/OOPBDdXZ/redland-solar-project-gets-279k-from-pge>

### **Kicking Coal, Oregon Emerges as a Solar and Energy Storage Development Hub**

Obsidian storage system, David Brown, a company co-founder and senior principal, said in an interview. Renewables LLC recently broke ground on a portion of its planned 400-MW Obsidian Solar Center in Lake County, Ore., with a potential 50-MW flow battery. It is the largest solar project under development in Oregon, nearly seven times the capacity of the state's biggest operating solar farm — Garrett Hering, *S&P Global Market Intelligence*, March 6, 2020:

<https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/kicking-coal-oregon-emerges-as-a-solar-and-energy-storage-development-hub-57104313>

### **New Solar Farm Project Planned in Ontario**

The first commercial solar project in Ontario [Ore.] is in the works, and comes with the hope of expanding access to renewable energy. The project, which would cost around \$4.5 million, involves 15 acres of land leased from the City of Ontario in the northwest part of the city near highway 201 — Read more at: Joe Siess, *Malheur Enterprise*, March 20, 2020:

<https://www.malheurenterprise.com/posts/6904/new-solar-farm-project-planned-in-ontario>

## Washington News

### 2020 Session sees some Environmental Progress, but Senate Fails to Pass Two Major climate Bills

Washington's Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC), that represents more than 20 statewide organizations, noted some environmental progress in 2020:

Community Solar (HB 2248, Representative Beth Doglio (D) – Olympia)

- Expands equitable access and investments of renewable energy through community solar projects

C-Pacer – (HB 2405, Representative Davina Duerr (D) – Bothell)

- Spurs building efficiency and resiliency through access to low cost loans

For more info see: Environmental Priorities Coalition, Washington State Wire, March 13, 2020:

<https://washingtonstatewire.com/2020-session-sees-some-environmental-progress-but-senate-fails-to-pass-two-major-climate-bills/>

### Washington State Passes Bill to Update Solar Recycling

The Washington State House and Senate have passed a bill that will update the state's solar recycling policy. This bill will inform the final design and adoption of a comprehensive solar recycling program that is data-driven and considers the lifespan of modules, which can last up to 50 years in the field —

Michael Bates, *Solar Industry*, March 11, 2020: <https://solarindustrymag.com/washington-state-passes-bill-to-update-solar-recycling>

### Solar Panels Added to Historic Downtown Mount Vernon Building

On the roof of the historic former post office building in downtown Mount Vernon are new solar panels, which will generate renewable energy and supply about a third of the building's electricity. The solar panel installation, completed last month, was done with little impact to the 1935 building's appearance or character — Jacqueline Allison, *Skagit Valley Herald*, March 12, 2020:

[https://www.goskagit.com/news/local\\_news/solar-panels-added-to-historic-downtown-mount-vernon-building/article\\_a519953a-a072-5739-93bb-93728e13796f.html](https://www.goskagit.com/news/local_news/solar-panels-added-to-historic-downtown-mount-vernon-building/article_a519953a-a072-5739-93bb-93728e13796f.html)

## Dual Land Use: Co-Location of Solar and Farm Land

### Bridging the Food-or-Energy Gap

Should land be used for solar panels or agriculture? The burgeoning Solar Sheep movement argues: Why not both? Lexie Hain tucks a chunk of business cards in her back pocket before bounding up to speak to a room of 75 livestock farmers. On a rain-dumping January day, they've driven in from around New York and New England. A polite lethargy has set in by the time Hain, the final presenter, stands up, but her talk, "Solar and Sheep: The New Power Couple," jolts the crowd like a dozen diner-coffee refills — Lynn Freehill-Maye, *Yes*, March 9, 2020:

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/environment/2020/03/09/sustainable-food-energy-land/>

## Industry News

### **Most US Solar Manufacturing Continues Despite Coronavirus Restriction**

American solar manufacturers are deciding whether to keep workers on the line during the coronavirus crisis or let facilities go dark for an unknown period of time. Many are choosing to stay in operation despite the risks. The solar industry — like many others — has framed its workers as “essential” in the face of state-, city- and countywide shutdown orders that allow only necessary labor to continue outside the home — Emma Foehringer Merchant, *GTM*, March 27, 2020:

<https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/much-u.s-solar-manufacturing-continues-despite-covid-19-restrictions>

### **Distributed Storage could see Growth in Demand amid COVID-19 Pandemic, analysts say**

The COVID-19 pandemic may cause short-term delays and hiccups for distributed energy projects — but some industry players are optimistic that unlike other sectors, demand for distributed storage and other systems will remain steady and even see an uptick in the long run — Kavya Balaraman, *Utility Dive*, March 26, 2020:

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/distributed-storage-could-see-growth-in-demand-amid-covid-19-pandemic-anal/574915/>

## National News

### **110 Kilowatts of Solar Energy to Offset 25% of Clear Creek's Overall Power Requirement**

The novel coronavirus has presented the solar industry with an unsavory smorgasbord of problems all at the same time. Many it shares with other businesses, but one it has nearly all to itself: a funding model that puts it at heightened risk. It is called the solar investment tax credit. In good financial times, the ITC is a boon and has been essential to making solar the major energy player it is today — David Ferris, *E&E News*, March 27, 2020: <https://www.eenews.net/stories/1062711911>

### **The Solar Industry Loses Fight to Include Tax Credit Changes in the “Senate Passed” Pandemic Stimulus Package**

The U.S Senate has approved a \$2 trillion rescue package in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The bill— agreed to by the Senate in the wee hours of Wednesday morning — isn’t what climate advocates had been hoping to see. The solar industry requests for extensions of tax credits and other supportive provisions were cut out entirely from the bill— Derik Lila, *PV Buzz*, March 26, 2020:

<https://pvbuzz.com/solar-tax-credit-rescue-pandemic/>

### **What Options will Emerge to Replace Tax Equity Financing for Solar?**

With the scope of global turmoil caused by Covid-19, tax equity, the predominant vehicle for solar project financing will slow down considerably. What options will arise to replace tax equity, and how will they shape the different branches of development? — Mike Brown, *pv magazine*, March 31, 2020:

<https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2020/03/31/what-options-will-emerge-to-replace-tax-equity-financing-for-solar/>

## Reports

### **Integrating Energy Efficiency, Solar, and Battery Storage in Utility Programs**

Customers can garner extra energy bill savings from programs that combine efficiency, solar, and storage (EE/Solar+) in a single comprehensive offering. These programs also open new value streams for utilities, increase grid resilience, and curtail greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. So why are they so rare? This report surveys the landscape of existing EE/Solar+ programs and pilots, analyzes the barriers they face, and highlights nine current groundbreaking offerings from utilities and independent service providers — ACEEE, February 26, 2020: <https://www.aceee.org/research-report/b2001>

### **Community Resilience Planning and Clean Energy Initiatives: A Review of City-Led Efforts for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**

Energy efficiency and renewable energy can enhance community resilience in the face of shocks and stresses like extreme weather caused by climate change. Despite this, our review of 66 city resilience plans from all over the world finds that most fail to include comprehensive sets of efficiency and renewable energy strategies — Dan York and Alexander Jarrah, ACEEE, January 30, 2020: <https://www.aceee.org/research-report/u2002>

### **Upcoming Conferences and Workshops**

#### **GoGreen Conference, Seattle, WA, *Postponed* to September 8, 2020**

GoGreen empowers business decision makers with sustainability strategies, tools and connections to create positive change within their organizations by facilitating environmental, economic and social performance improvement through our topics and best practices covered at each conference. Join us for an action packed day of driving social and sustainable change in your organization! To learn more and register: <http://seattle.gogreenconference.net/>

#### **Oregon Solar Energy Conference: Portland Crowne Place, *Postponed* to August 18-20, 2020**

The Oregon Solar Energy Conference is the nation's best regional solar conference. In 2019 we hosted over 500 attendees representing over 220 companies. The conference offered over 20 hours registered for NABCEP CE. Join us in 2020 for another amazing event. To submit session proposals and to register see: <https://www.oseia.org/osec>  
Click here to register for the concurrent and FREE Oregon Solar Career Expo, August 18-20, 2020: <https://www.oseia.org/osec/careerexpo>

---

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](mailto:whitneya@energy.wsu.edu)

While every URL in Solar Newsbriefs is checked for accuracy prior to distribution, URLs may change, and servers may temporarily fail to connect to working URLs.

If any of your colleagues would like to be added to the distribution list to receive Solar Newsbriefs, or you would like to be omitted from this distribution list, please email your request and contact information to [solarnewsbriefs@energy.wsu.edu](mailto:solarnewsbriefs@energy.wsu.edu).

This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under the Solar Plus Strategies for Oregon and Washington award number DE-EE0007665.

This report was prepared as an account of work sponsored by an agency of the United States Government. Neither the United States Government nor any agency thereof, nor any of their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government or any agency thereof. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government or any agency thereof.