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## Clean Energy Economy News | Online edition

**March 17, 2010** | Vol. 3, No. 3



The meeting series "Building Trades in the Clean Energy Economy" opened with a well-attended event in Carbondale on March 11. CLEER is hosting these forums for the Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative to gather input from building trade professionals on the design of local energy efficiency programs to maximize economic benefits.

More info on Building Trades events coming up March 18 in Glenwood Springs and March 24 in Rifle.

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## Xcel Energy and Holy Cross Energy introduce tiered rates this summer

Residential electric customers of Xcel Energy and Holy Cross Energy will soon be paying tiered rates for electricity, paying more as their monthly use climbs higher.

Xcel is imposing the two-block tiered rates only in the hot months of the year, from June through September, as part of an overall rate increase for the investor-owned utility.

Holy Cross is planning a permanent, three-tier rate, but the overall package is designed to be revenue-neutral for the rural electric co-op.

Xcel customers in Carbondale, New Castle, Silt, Rifle and Parachute will be charged slightly less than the current rate for the first 500 kilowatt-hours (kWh) used per month, and about 3 cents per kWh more for electricity used over the 500 kWh threshold.



Given that the typical residential customer uses about 687 kWh per month in summer, the tiered rate is expected to add about \$5.60 to the average summer bill, according to Bill Levis, director of Colorado Office of Consumer Counsel.

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission, which approved the tiered rates on March 3, estimates that year round, Xcel residential customers who use that average monthly amount will pay about 2 percent more in the summer months and about 5 percent less in the winter months.

"For years, consumers have advocated 'the more you use, the more you pay' for electricity," PUC Chairman Ron Binz said in a statement issued March 3. "Today, we're making that slogan a reality."

The tiered rates should "both encourage efficient use of electricity and be relatively easy for customers to understand," said Karen Hyde, Xcel vice president for rates and regulatory affairs.

Holy Cross is midway through a process of shifting to tiered rates, and expects to introduce the program this summer, said Steve Casey, director of member services.

The preliminary plan, outlined in the utility's Consumer Connections member newsletter, would charge 8 cents a kWh for the first 400 kWh, 9.6 cents for 400 to 1,200 kWh, and 11.2 cents for usage above 1,200. The utility's present flat rate is 9 cents per kWh. The final threshold amounts for the rate blocks and the accompanying electric rates have yet to be finalized or approved by the Holy Cross Board of Directors, and could change.



The newsletter notes that under the preliminary rate structure plan, a Holy Cross customer with average usage would see no significant change in their bill. A customer using 250 kWh less than the average would see their bill decline by about \$1.60 per month, while a customer using 250 kWh more than the average would see their bill increase by \$3.

Casey also noted that residential customers will still have the option of being billed on the time-of-day rate, which charges customers 4 cents per kWh during off-peak daytime and nighttime hours, and 13 cents a kWh during peak hours from 7 to 11 a.m. and 5 to 10 p.m.

He also noted that some winter-time adjustments may be made in the three-tiered rate for customers who depend on all-electric heat.

### **In the news**

*The Denver Post*, March 4, 2010  
[Xcel plans tiered electricity rates this summer](#)  
 By Mark Jaffe

*The Denver Post*, March 7, 2010  
[Energy usage in the 21st Century](#)  
 By allowing Xcel Energy to charge a premium for higher electricity usage, the PUC is embracing modern realities.  
*Editorial*

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## **Colorado boosts renewable energy standard to 30 percent by 2020**

New legislation approved March 8 will require the state's two large investor-owned utilities to provide 30 percent of their power supply from renewable energy by 2020.

The move marks the second upward nudge of the state's Renewable Energy Standard, first approved by voters in 2004. That measure set a goal of 10 percent by 2105, but was achieved within two years. In 2007, legislators increased the standard to 20 percent by 2020. Now the bar is set for 30 percent by 2020.

House Bill 1001 will create thousands of new jobs, provide Colorado with more clean energy and lead to 100,000 solar rooftops over the next decade, supporters say.

"I want to thank legislators for their leadership in advancing Colorado's nationally recognized New Energy Economy," Gov. Bill Ritter said after the measure passed. "This legislation will give Colorado the strongest renewable energy standard in the Rocky Mountain West and one of the highest standards in the nation.

"We are building a clean energy economy and a new energy future for Colorado, showing the rest of the country how to increase economic, energy and environmental security for generations to come," Ritter added.

State Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village, was a lead sponsor of the legislation along with Sen. Bruce Whitehead, D-Hesperus, and Reps. Max Tyler, D-Lakewood, and Jack Pommer, D-Boulder.

"Passage of the bill was the result of a major coordinated effort among conservation organizations, led by Environment Colorado, clean energy businesses, local governments, labor organizations, and other businesses and non-profits," said Tom Easley, director of programs for the [Rocky Mountain Climate Organization](#). Easley and others testified in support of the bill. "The support of Xcel Energy was key to passage," he added.

### **In the news**

*The Denver Post*, Feb. 5, 2010

[Panel hears proposal to hike renewable-energy requirement](#)

By Jessica Fender

SolveClimate.com, March 9, 2010

[Colorado shoots for 30 percent renewable energy by 2020](#)

By Dave Levitan

*The Denver Post*, March 11, 2010

[Advancing Colorado's New Energy Economy](#)

Guest column by Gov. Bill Ritter

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## **Legislature considering 16 bills related to clean energy**

The Colorado legislature is moving forward this year with legislation that would provide financing options for clean energy, address property tax issues for clean energy generation systems, promote green jobs, open doors for community-owned clean energy systems such as solar arrays, encourage water conservation and more clearly define regulation of geothermal resources.

Here is a summary of clean energy bills still moving through the legislative process. To track bill status in the coming weeks, use these links:

[House Bills](#) | [Senate Bills](#)

### **Financing**

#### **HB 10-1328: New Energy Jobs Creation Act**

Sponsors: Rep. Joe Miklosi, D-Denver; Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village

Status: Awaiting 2nd reading vote on House floor

Creates the Colorado New Energy Improvement District to administer and finance a statewide opt-in loan program for residential energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements, with debt repayments made on the home owner's annual property tax bill over 20 years. Allows the district to issue up to \$250 million in tax-exempt bonds. Requires county commissioners to authorize the program for residents. Establishes a nine-member governing board.

#### **SB 10-100: Greater Flexibility for Clean Energy Financing Districts**

Sponsors: Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village; Rep. Joe Miklosi, D-Denver

Status: Passed Senate, in House Transportation and Energy Committee

Current law prohibits local improvement districts for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements (energy LIDs) from crossing county boundaries. This bill allows energy LIDs to cross county boundaries and include properties in multiple counties, whether contiguous or non-contiguous, if county commissioners of the affected counties agree to share district costs.

The bill also expands the definition of renewable energy improvements for energy LIDs to include improvements located at a community location rather than directly on a residential or commercial building. It also exempts county energy LIDs from certain public notice and county treasurer debt authorization requirements.

**HB 10-1182: Limited expansion of powers of the Colorado Clean Energy Development Authority**

Sponsors: Rep. Judy Solano, D-Brighton; Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village  
Status: Passed House, in Senate Local Government and Energy Committee

Expands the types of loans and financing agreements the Authority may make to facilitate electric power interconnection projects. Specifically authorizes commercial loan agreements for projects that connect clean energy generating facilities to the utility transmission grid.

## Taxation

**HB 10-1267: Property Tax Valuation of Residential Solar Electric System**

Sponsors: Rep. Andy Kerr, D-Lakewood; Sen. Chris Romer, D-Denver  
Status: Passed House 2nd reading

Under current law, third-party owners of solar electric systems must pay business personal property tax on the facilities leased to residential households. This bill defines third-party owned residential facilities as household furnishings, thereby exempting them from property tax. To qualify for the exemption, systems may not be owned by the residential property owner, may not exceed 100 kilowatts, and may not produce income for the homeowner. Rebates, offsets, credits, and reimbursements for renewable energy projects are not considered income under this bill.

**SB 10-19: Valuation of New Hydroelectric Facilities**

Sponsors: Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village; Rep. Randy Fischer, D-Fort Collins  
Status: Passed the Senate, awaiting House 2nd reading

This bill, recommended by the Water Resources Review Committee, specifies that for purposes of property taxation, new hydroelectric energy facilities will be valued using the income approach if (1) energy production begins on or after January 1, 2010, and (2) generation capacity is more than 5 megawatts. This means the actual value will be based on the projected gross revenue of such facilities, measured in nominal dollars. Under current law, assessors are allowed to use either the cost approach, the market approach, or the income approach, and traditionally have used the cost approach.

**SB 10-177: Promotion of Biomass Energy Development**

Sponsors: Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village; Sen. Dan Gibbs, D-Silverthorne; Rep. Christine Scanlan, D-Dillon; Rep. Marsha Looper, R-Calhan  
Status: Awaiting Senate 2nd reading

Places biomass energy facilities under regulation of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, and specifies that biomass energy facilities must be valued in the same manner as wind and solar energy facilities, using the income approach, where the value is based on the projected gross revenue of these facilities.

## Jobs

**HB 10-1262: Scholarship Programs for Green Jobs**

Sponsors: Rep. Jerry Frangas, D-Denver  
Status: In House Appropriations Committee

Establishes the Colorado Green Jobs Scholarship and requires the Colorado Department of Higher Education to award at least \$500,000 in scholarships over the next four years.

**HB 10-1333: Green Jobs Colorado Training Program**

Sponsors: Rep. Edward Vigil, D-Alamosa; Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village; Sen. Linda Newell, D-Littleton  
Status: Passed House, in Senate Local Government and Energy Committee

Creates a two-year, \$700,000 pilot program to offer grants to workforce development organizations, employers, educators and training providers, youth corps groups, and economic development organizations to provide job training for the wind, solar, renewable energy, and energy efficiency industries. Applicants must fund at least 20 percent of the costs of their training program.

## Community-owned systems

**HB 10-1342: Community Solar Gardens**

Sponsors: Rep. Claire Levy, D-Boulder; Sen. Suzanne Williams, D-Aurora  
Status: Awaiting 2nd reading vote on House floor

Directs the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to adopt new rules by October 1 to apply rebates to solar generation facilities jointly owned by 10 or more utility customers at a shared location, defined as community solar gardens.

## Water conservation

**HB 10-1204: Inclusion of Conservation Standards in the State Plumbing Code**

Sponsors: Rep. John Soper, D-Thornton; Sen. Lois Tochtrop, D-Thornton  
Status: Passed House, passed Senate 2nd reading

Adds conservation to the standards that must be addressed in the state plumbing code.

**HB 10-1358: Water-Smart Homes**

Sponsors: Rep. Randy Fischer, D-Fort Collins; Sen. Michael Johnston, D-Denver  
Status: Introduced in the House

Requires builders of new single-family homes to offer buyers water-smart options, including water-efficient toilets, faucets and showerheads, dishwashers and clothes washers, landscaping, and pressure-reduction valves.

## Geothermal resources

**SB 10-174: Regulating Development of Geothermal Resources**

Sponsors: Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village; Rep. Tom Massey, R-Poncha Springs  
Status: Awaiting Senate 2nd reading

This bill makes 5 key changes to the regulation of geothermal resource development.

**Geothermal Resource Leasing Fund.** Authorizes federal mineral lease revenues from geothermal development on federal lands to be used to provide grants to state agencies, school districts, and local governments affected by geothermal development and production. Grants are to be awarded by the Department of Local Affairs primarily for planning and services necessitated by geothermal development and production, and secondarily to promote geothermal energy resource development.

**Groundwater ownership.** Specifies that the property rights to geothermal resources are part of surface ownership unless these rights are "severed" or separated from the land and sold or leased. In cases where geothermal resources are severed, the bill provides the geothermal resource owner the right to reasonably access these resources.

**Permits.** Clarifies that drilling and well permits must be obtained from the State Engineer in the Division of Water Resources prior to exploring or producing a geothermal resource and clarifies requirements that must be met to receive a permit. The bill also specifies that a well permit from the State Engineer is not required for the direct use of a horizontal, closed-loop geothermal system that does not use a geothermal fluid.

**Property taxation.** Specifies that geothermal energy facilities must be valued in the same manner as wind and solar energy facilities, using the income approach, where the value is based on the projected gross revenue of these facilities.

**Local government planning.** Allows municipalities and counties to designate geothermal development as an activity of state interest under House Bill 74-1041.

#### **In the news**

*The Denver Post*, March 13, 2010

[Geothermal energy is heating up](#)

Opinion column by Vincent Carroll

## **Other topics**

### **HB 10-1098: Increased Transparency in Governance of Rural Electric Co-ops**

Sponsors: Rep. Claire Levy, D-Boulder

Status: Passed House, in Senate Local Government and Energy Committee

Requires rural electric cooperatives to allow public input at board meetings, post board meeting notice and packet 14 days in advance on website; post board meeting minutes on website, post board election policies 6 months in advance of election, give all candidates equal access to member lists, and randomly order candidate names on ballots. Prohibits candidates or employees from handling ballots without a neutral party present, prohibits a co-op from spending money to oppose a candidate.

### **HB 10-1331: Green Building Incentive Pilot Program**

Sponsors: Rep. Cheri Gerou, R-Evergreen

Status: In House Transportation and Energy Committee

Creates a Governor's Energy Office program to award grants to qualified applicants who are preparing to sell their current homes with poor energy efficiency ratings and purchase highly efficient new homes. Grants will be awarded for applicants to make energy efficiency improvements to their current homes to increase their marketability.

Applicants are required to submit specified documentation related to the energy requirements for both the existing and the new residences to GEO, as well as closing documents for the new residence. Funding for the grants is to come from federal funds received by GEO through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), for a total of \$317,000 per year over two years.

### **HB 10-1349: Re-Energize Colorado Program for State Parks**

Sponsors: Rep. Randy Fischer, D-Fort Collins; Rep. Sal Pace, D-Pueblo; Sen. Gail Schwartz, D-Snowmass Village; Sen. Abel Tapia, D-Pueblo

Status: Introduced in the House

Directs the Governor's Energy Office to create an inventory and map of state lands that have potential for renewable energy development to benefit electrical energy needs of state parks. Encourages leasing of those lands for renewable energy development; Encourages state parks to fully offset their electrical needs using renewable energy by 2020.

### **HB 10-1363: Incentives to Produce Biogenic Gas**

Sponsors: Rep. Christine Scanlan, D-Dillon; Sen. Al White, R-Hayden

Status: Introduced in the House

Expands the definition of "clean energy" to include landfill gas if the state increases its renewable energy portfolio standard beyond the current 20 percent.

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## **Energy inventory will add up use and spending across Garfield County**

Ever wonder just how much energy we are using in our communities? Or how much we are spending for it?

The Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative this month launched a project to inventory energy use and spending throughout Garfield County.

The goal is to develop a baseline of energy use data from throughout the county in 2009 for consumption of electricity, natural gas, propane, gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel.

"It's a big task, but the results will be remarkably telling and useful," said Mike Ogburn, who helps coordinate energy tracking consultant for CLEER, the nonprofit managing the Garfield Initiative.

"We'll be gathering data from utilities, fuel vendors and state records," Ogburn said. "And we will use energy inventory work that has already been done in some of the communities."

One part of the data gathering started during the winter, as the nine local government partners in the Garfield NECI charted recent utility data for all their buildings. That information is being fed in to an online energy tracking system that will help building managers save public funds through smarter energy management.

The countywide energy inventory, however, will collect data for all types of users: residential, commercial, industrial, schools, governments and transportation fuels. The one sector that won't be included in the inventory is the energy used by natural gas exploration and production, because the level of activity can change significantly from year to year.

"Gathering this baseline information will help our region identify the significant economic opportunity of increased energy efficiency," said Alice Laird, director of CLEER.

The resulting inventory will list energy spending, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. "We'll set this up so it can be easily repeated in future years, so that progress in reducing energy use, costs, and emissions can be adequately measured over time," Ogburn said.

"This project will give us an understanding of the costs of our energy use and the potential for savings across all sectors in the county from investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy," he added.

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## **New Castle initiates auto idling reduction efforts**

The Town of New Castle's Climate Action Advisory Commission (CAAC) is spearheading an effort to reduce excessive vehicle idling. On March 2, the CAAC invited Town Council members to sign a pledge not to idle their vehicles longer than 30 seconds, except when necessary for safety reasons. The response to "Pledge for an Idle-free New Castle" was unanimous.

Many town staff have also taken the pledge. Town Administrator Andy Barton has implemented a restricted idling policy for the municipal fleet, and the council has endorsed enforcement of current state law, which prohibits leaving an unattended vehicle idling.

New Castle residents can sign the pledge at Town Hall or on the Town's website.

**The general rule of thumb on idling is 10 seconds:** if you car will be idling for longer than 10 seconds, you will save gasoline if you switch it off, and then on again when it's time to go.

This program will help New Castle achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals outlined in its recently adopted Climate Action Plan. The immediate benefit of reducing idling is an improvement in air quality and better protections for public health. Emissions from idling vehicles have been found to aggravate breathing problems, such as asthma, especially in children and seniors.

Town leaders are hopeful that with this educational campaign, the town will not have to enact ordinances against idling, such as those in force in other communities.

The New Castle idling reduction program is serving as a pilot for the Garfield County Public Health Department. The CAAC is also working with schools to encourage drivers to reduce idling to protect students' health. Commission member Drew Simonson, a senior at Coal Ridge High School, is using the idling reduction campaign as her senior project, and is working to educate her schoolmates and their parents about this simple step for cleaner air.

[More info on Town of New Castle website](#)

[Take the pledge online](#)

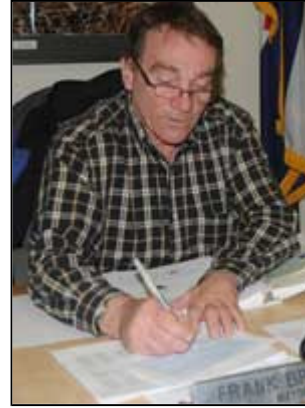
[Online list of pledge participants](#)

**Online info** about idling

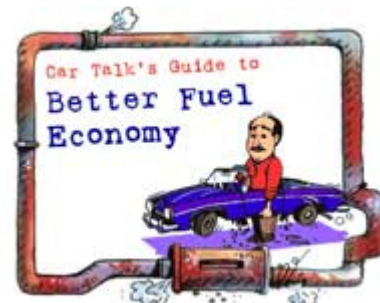
U.S. Department of Energy, Advanced Vehicle Testing Activity

[Heavy-Duty Truck Idle Reduction Technology Demonstrations](#)

**Car Talk** [Guide to Better Fuel Economy](#)



New Castle Mayor Frank Breslin signs the no-idling pledge.



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## Garfield clean energy board elects new officers

The Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative Advisory Board elected Shelley Kaup, a Glenwood Springs City Council member, as the board's new chair, and Greg Russi, a New Castle Town Council member, as vice-chair.



Judith Hayward, Parachute Mayor Pro-Tem, was re-elected to the position of board secretary.

Kaup replaces Advisory Board Chair Michael Hassig, who is term-limited as mayor of Carbondale. Russi replaces Rifle Mayor Keith Lambert, who will continue to serve on the Advisory Board as a regular member.

The nine-member Garfield NECI Advisory Board guides the work of the county wide clean energy initiative that is helping residents, businesses and local governments cut energy costs

and increase renewable energy. The initiative was launched with a \$1.6 million grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. The nine board members, along with nine alternates, represent the nine local governments that have joined together in the initiative.

The Garfield NECI partners are Garfield County, the six municipalities from Parachute to Carbondale, the Garfield Public Library District and the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority.

At the board's regular monthly meeting on Wednesday in Glenwood Springs, board members thanked Mayor Hassig for his leadership of the energy initiative during its first year.

"Your counsel and leadership have been important. You've held a steady hand on the tiller," said David Sturges, alternate board member from the City of Glenwood Springs.

Over the past year, the initiative has launched projects for the local government partners and schools to save energy, make energy efficiency upgrades to existing buildings and install solar arrays, provided rebates to homes and businesses for energy efficiency and solar electric systems, and given away 10,000 energy efficient light bulbs, among many other projects. The initiative is managed by the nonprofit organization CLEER.

A major task of the Advisory Board in the coming months will be to develop a longer term clean energy program that will continue to serve the residents, local governments, schools and businesses of Garfield County after completion of the original grant.

For more information about the Initiative and its clean energy programs and services, visit [www.GarfieldCleanEnergy.org](http://www.GarfieldCleanEnergy.org).

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## **Clean Energy Collective proposal offers solar PV ownership to all Holy Cross customers**

The Clean Energy Collective is proposing a new way for utility customers to invest in renewable energy, by offering fractional ownership in a large solar array.

Under the Collective's model, utility customers would be offered fractionalized ownership in the clean energy project, buying in at a level they can afford, and then enjoying the benefits of lower electric bills, utility rebates and federal tax credits.

"We feel this community-based model will drive significant increases in clean energy adoption through reduced costs, ease of ownership and the inherent ability to serve all utility customers, no matter their location, access to clean energy or amount of funds available to purchase a solution," said Paul Spencer, a Basalt entrepreneur who founded the Clean Energy Collective, a for-profit business.

The Collective's first proposed project is a 1.8-megawatt solar photovoltaic array to be built at the Garfield County Airport near Rifle, on a 40-year land lease with Garfield County. Ownership in the array would be offered to all residential and commercial customers of Holy Cross Energy, the rural electric cooperative that serves Battlement Mesa, rural Garfield County and much of Eagle and Pitkin counties.

Under the proposed plan, which has been approved in concept by the Holy Cross Energy board of directors, customers anywhere in the Holy Cross service area could buy in for as little as \$500. That means home and business owners with property ill-suited for solar, or customers who can't afford a system large enough to fully offset their use, could easily buy a portion of the array to offset all or a portion of their electric use.

Renters who pay their own electric bills could also purchase, and their ownership could be resold at a later date to the next tenant or other Holy Cross customers waiting to buy in.

Spencer believes he can offer competitive prices for the renewable energy ownership because it's less costly to install one large solar array compared to hundreds of smaller arrays on individual properties.

"We'll be able to offer significant savings for buying in bulk, and the array will be located for optimal power production," said Spencer, a businessman who has launched various environmental and technology companies prior to this venture.

As part of the project, the Clean Energy Collective designed software that interfaces with the Holy Cross billing system, so participating customers will receive a credit for their portion of the actual monthly power production from the array.

The Collective model also calls for saving 2 percent of the array's power revenues in an escrow account. Those funds will be used to keep panels cleared of snow cover and dust, and over time to replace inverters and collector panels as their productivity falls off. "The idea is that 50 years from now, the array will be producing just as much power as it can today," said Spencer.

While the Clean Energy Collective is still negotiating a power purchase agreement with Holy Cross Energy, the utility is keen on the proposal.

"It provides our member-customers with an option to participate in renewable energy generation, even if they can't install something on their property," said Steve Casey, member services administrator for Holy Cross. Casey said the proposed 1.8 megawatt array would double the utility's present solar PV portfolio and "help move the co-op in a favorable direction toward incorporation of renewable energy."

The Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative Advisory Board also gave a unanimous thumbs-up to the concept, and urged Xcel Energy and Glenwood Springs Electric, the other two electric utilities serving county residents, to explore similar projects.

The Clean Energy Collective is starting with the solar array at the Garfield County Airport, where the company is waiting for final approvals from the Federal Aviation Administration and Garfield County. Holy Cross must also win approval from the federal Rural Utilities Service for its power purchase agreement.

"We've made some big investments in the legal structure, tax structure and software for this idea," Spencer said of the Collective model. "Now it can be replicated. Our intent is that this model be used prolifically throughout the United States to spur exponential adoption of clean energy."

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## **GEO offers sneak preview of 2010 rebate program**

**Consumers to get money back for appliances,  
solar panels, insulation, home efficiency improvements**

**Governor's Energy Office encourages homeowners to plan ahead**

Coloradoans can soon tap into millions of Recovery Act dollars and take steps to save money, boost the economy and save energy as the Governor's Energy Office and partners prepare to launch a sweeping, statewide rebate program April 19. This initiative is designed to bring energy efficiency and renewable energy to tens of thousands of Coloradoans and will provide **nearly 75,000 rebates worth approximately \$22 million.**

Coloradoans will be able to connect easily with opportunities to save dollars and do some good for the economy and the environment by visiting the **Recharge Colorado** website (also launching April 19) to sign up for rebates on a wide array of appliances, services and equipment that will save energy, reduce energy bills and create jobs for Colorado.

The website and rebate program will offer Colorado consumers a service unprecedented in scope - providing comprehensive and localized information about rebates, financial incentives, contractors, energy conservation tips and availability of goods and services across the state.

Items eligible for rebates will include:

- Equipment such as dishwashers, clothes washers, refrigerators, as well as furnaces and hot water heaters.
- Residential energy efficiency measures such as insulation and air sealing, duct sealing, whole-house energy audits and whole-house energy monitors.
- Renewable energy projects, including solar photovoltaic systems, solar hot water systems for homes and businesses and small wind installations.

About one-third of the rebates will be provided for ENERGY STAR appliances, furnaces and hot water heaters. The bulk of the funding for the program is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Local partners across Colorado provided additional dollars.

"Coloradoans are unique and our goal was to develop a rebate program and education campaign that would match the 'do it yourself' ethic that is a hallmark of this great state," said GEO director Tom Plant. "We look forward to providing Coloradoans this opportunity to save money, save energy and participate in our New Energy Economy.

"We invite consumers to discover the wealth of energy-saving information available to them through this one-stop clearinghouse at our soon-to-be-launched Recharge Colorado web site. Connecting people to this information will, in turn, mean more jobs and business for the companies that provide these valuable services," Plant said.

[For details, click here.](#)

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## **EPA names Governor's Energy Office a 2010 Energy Star Partner of the Year**

### **GEO and statewide partners honored for second consecutive year; Market penetration of ENERGY STAR New Homes hits nearly 33 percent for 2009**

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) and more than 50 statewide partners have been awarded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Award for the second consecutive year.

Colorado's program was selected for its success in supporting the construction of energy-efficient ENERGY STAR New Homes. These homes are typically 20 percent to 30 percent more efficient than standard homes, improving quality and comfort while reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

GEO's local partners include the Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative and its nine local government partners, Mountain to Mesa Homebuilders Association, CLEER, Xcel Energy, Holy Cross Energy, SourceGas and Glenwood Springs Electric.

The EPA has linked significant cost and pollution savings to its ENERGY STAR program. Last year alone Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved \$17 billion on their energy bills and reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 30 million vehicles.

"Congratulations to our many outstanding statewide partners and the GEO for this award. Energy efficiency is one of the most important components of Colorado's New Energy Economy.

"Building new homes that save energy and money means jobs in the efficiency industry. It also bolsters our energy security and protects our environment and climate."

In 2009, the GEO partnered with more than 50 community sponsors - including local governments, non-profits, utilities, real estate professionals, homebuilders, home energy raters - on the construction of ENERGY STAR qualifying new homes. The hard work of partnering organizations has made the program successful across Colorado. -- Gov. Bill Ritter

The work of GEO and its partners resulted in 2,350 new homes in Colorado earning the ENERGY STAR label in 2009, making for a record of nearly 33 percent market share of all new home construction - and up dramatically from 8 percent in 2006. The GEO also helped register more than 70 new Colorado ENERGY STAR New Home builders in 2009, pushing the total of qualified ENERGY STAR homebuilders to more than 356 in the state.

Other accomplishments the EPA considered in its ENERGY STAR award to the GEO and its Colorado partners:

- The GEO and partners presented more than 57 ENERGY STAR trainings to more than 1,880 Colorado building industry professionals, including four trainings in Rifle.
- Highlights of Colorado's efforts include grants from GEO totaling \$248,500 for training, education and promotional efforts statewide.
- The program established 11 regional ENERGY STAR New Homes Programs in Colorado, supported by 54 local sponsors, including cities, counties, utilities and nonprofits.

"The GEO and its partners are leading the way in creating and implementing solutions to climate change through greater energy efficiency," said Gina McCarthy, EPA assistant administrator for air and radiation. "The Colorado program has helped its customers understand how they can help protect our environment while saving energy and money."

The ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Awards are given to a variety of organizations to recognize their efforts to improve energy efficiency and reduce pollution, resulting in significant cost savings. Award winners are selected from more than 17,000 organizations that participate in the ENERGY STAR program.

[More info](#)

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## EIA ENERGY IN BRIEF

Coal Production by Coal-Producing Region, 2008  
(Million Short Tons)



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Annual Coal Report 2008 (September 2009).

## What is the role of coal in the United States?

Due to its relatively low cost and abundance, coal is used to generate about half of the electricity consumed in the United States. Coal is the largest domestically-produced source of energy. Coal use, however, results in higher amounts of carbon dioxide per unit of energy than the use of oil or natural gas.

[Read the EIA Energy in Brief](#)

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## TRAININGS

## **GEO 2010 rebate program webinars for industry professionals**

The GEO 2010 Rebate Program will launch in mid-April. In preparation, GEO is holding a series of webinars this week for industry professionals. The GEO strongly recommends that industry representatives planning on taking advantage of the GEO rebates attend the webinar (s) for their field. The webinar format will include a presentation and discussion. The total meeting length will range from 60 to 90 minutes.

### **Wind Professionals**

Wednesday, March 17, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

[Register](#)

### **Residential Mechanical and Plumbing Professionals**

Thursday, March 18, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

[Register](#)

### **Residential Insulation and Air Sealing Professionals**

Friday, March 19, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

[Register](#)

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## **DOE webinar: Getting to Net Zero Today Through a Performance-Based Design/Build Process**

Thursday, March 18  
10 to 11:30 a.m.

This summer, the U.S. Department of Energy will open the doors to a new national showcase building on the campus of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden. The design of the 220,000-square-foot building focused on very low energy needs offset by on-site renewable energy generation.

To drive energy performance, an integrated design/build team established LEED Platinum as a requirement and set an energy use target of 25,000 Btu/square foot/year.

Through this presentation, members of the project's design/build team will demonstrate how net-zero energy buildings are achievable and marketable now.

[More info](#) | [Register](#)

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## **High Performance Building Program Energy 101 Webinar**

### **Free training for non-engineers**

**Thursday, March 18**  
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Governor's Energy Office webinar, High Performance Building Program Energy 101, will help the non-engineer understand the fundamentals of energy use in commercial buildings. Instructors will present current building requirements and energy benchmarking strategies, and examine techniques for setting and reaching energy benchmarks. The webinar will also



provide information on best building practices to limit energy use while supporting occupant comfort.

[More info](#)

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## High Performance Building Program Energy 101 Workshop

### Free training for non-engineers

#### **Friday, March 26**

CMC Summit Campus building tours: Noon to 1 p.m.

Workshop: 1 to 5 p.m.

#### **Colorado Mountain College - Summit Campus**

107 Denison Placer Road, Breckenridge

Benefit from the free energy of leading architects and engineers as they illuminate high performance building in a workshop for planners, funders, designers, builders, operations and maintenance managers.

Representatives of the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) are touring the state to meet with individuals involved in all phases of achieving high performance building in their communities. The High Performance Building Program works through a collaborative process encompassing planning, funding, design, construction, operations and maintenance.

[More info](#)

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## BPI Building Analyst Training

### Week-long and three-day intensive classes offered

This comprehensive training program teaches you how to apply building science technology to help customers solve heating, cooling and air leakage problems that are driving high energy costs, while also providing them with a more comfortable, safe and durable home. Building science training will benefit your business and help the community to become more energy efficient.

#### **Full Building Analyst Course with both exams**

April 5-10, 2010

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Colorado Mountain College, West Garfield Campus, Rifle

Fee: \$1,650 includes lunches and fees for written and field exams

This BPI Building Analyst training provides core building science knowledge, concepts, and field practice to prepare candidates to pass the Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification exams.

The course is intended for individuals who have no previous building analyst training. The course covers the fundamentals of building science and analyzing building performance

problems including energy efficiency, safety, health, and indoor air quality, as required for BPI Building Analyst certification exams.

### **Intensive Building Analyst Course with both exams**

April 23-26, 2010

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Colorado Mountain College, West Garfield Campus, Rifle

Fee: \$550 includes lunches and fees for written and field exams

This intensive BPI Building Analyst Exam Prep reviews core building science knowledge and concepts and provides field practice to prepare candidates to pass the Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification exams.

The course is intended for individuals who have already completed some building analyst training, but would like additional review and practice before taking the certification exams.

The course includes one day of classroom review and practice with a BPI certified instructor using testing equipment in the field. The second day, students will take the written exam and the last two days, one-on-one field exams will be scheduled with a BPI approved exam proctor.

[Download the course flyer.](#)

Space is limited, and early registration is recommended. To register, call Colorado Mountain College Aspen Campus, (970) 925-7740.

More course information, contact Rick Johnson, CMC Aspen Instructional Chair, (970) 925-7740, ex. 2417 or [wjohnson@coloradomtn.edu](mailto:wjohnson@coloradomtn.edu).

More information about BPI certification: [www.bpi.org](http://www.bpi.org) or (518) 899-2727

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## **Grant application workshop: USDA grants for small business, farm and ranch energy projects**

**Tuesday, April 6**

1 to 4:30 p.m.

Colorado Mountain College

1402 Blake Ave., Glenwood Springs

A free workshop is being offered to small business owners, farmers and ranchers to learn how to prepare a successful application for the U.S. Department of Agriculture clean energy grant and loan program. The grant and loan program can help pay for energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installations on the production side of farms and ranches and for small businesses.



Pattie Snidow, northwest area director for USDA Rural Development, will explain the basics of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Grant and Loan Program.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency program provides grants that cover 25 percent of the costs of installing renewable energy systems to offset present use and making energy efficiency improvements to production-side farm operations and to small businesses.

Grant amounts top out at \$500,000 for renewable energy projects and at \$250,000 for energy efficiency projects. The program will also provide a federal guarantee to local lenders for up to 50 percent of project costs, topping out at \$25 million for renewable energy projects and at \$10 million for energy efficiency projects.

Property owners must fill out the grant application themselves, and the grants are judged in a national competition. "The number one problem for applicants is an incomplete application," said P.J. Howe, area specialist for USDA Rural Development.

The workshops are hosted by the Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative, Clean Energy Economy for the Region and Colorado Mountain College.

Register by Friday, April 2, 2010, online at [www.GarfieldCleanEnergy.org](http://www.GarfieldCleanEnergy.org) or by e-mail: [events@CleanEnergyEconomy.net](mailto:events@CleanEnergyEconomy.net)

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## EVENTS

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### Forums share information and seek feedback from building trades

The Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative is hosting a series of three meetings this month for building, insulation and HVAC contractors, solar installers and energy auditors to learn about boosting business through local and state rebate and financing programs.

The first of the three meetings, held March 11 in Carbondale, drew more than 40 building trades professionals, and included a lively conversation on the proposed clean energy finance district for Garfield County, the value of professional certifications, and training opportunities offered by Colorado Mountain College.



The "Building Trades in the Clean Energy Economy" meetings brief trades people and seek their feedback on:

- A clean energy finance district under development for Garfield County
- State and utility rebate offerings
- Development of a local audit and retrofit program
- The federal Home Star legislation

Building trades people who live or work in Garfield County are invited to attend either of the two remaining meetings to be held in Glenwood Springs and Rifle.

**Glenwood Springs: Thursday, March 18, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
Glenwood Canyon Brew Pub, 402 7th St.

**Rifle: Wednesday, March 24, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
Garfield County Human Services Building, 195 W. 14th St.

Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative is hosting the meetings, which are free. Food and beverages will be served.

The Building Trades series is sponsored by Alpine Bank, SourceGas, Xcel Energy, Holy Cross Energy, Mountain to Mesa Home Builders Association, the Governor's Energy Office and CLEER.

Please RSVP by calling 704-9200, visiting [www.GarfieldCleanEnergy.org](http://www.GarfieldCleanEnergy.org), or by e-mail to [events@CleanEnergyEconomy.net](mailto:events@CleanEnergyEconomy.net).

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## ENERGY STAR Open House at Coryell Ranch

### Tuesday, March 23

Come at 3:30 or 5:30 p.m. for a short presentation follow by a guided tour of the house

191 Stonefly, Coryell Ranch, Carbondale

Architects, homeowners, builders, realtors, appraisers, auditors and other building professionals are invited to an ENERGY STAR Open House. Learn about the features and benefits of building or selling ENERGY STAR homes. See the home's energy efficient systems - lighting, appliances, heating and cooling, water and ventilation -- in action. Experience blower door tests and infrared analysis demonstrations.

Experts will be on hand to talk about energy efficient measures and the rebates and incentives that will become available in April 2010.

FREE beer & wine and goodies will be served.

Please RSVP to [mary@roaringforkenergystar.com](mailto:mary@roaringforkenergystar.com) or call (970) 920-7276

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## Earth Hour

Saturday, March 27

8:30 to 9:30 p.m., local time

For Earth Hour, millions of people around the world will call for action on climate change by doing something quite simple -- turning off their lights for one hour. The event symbolizes that by working together, each of us can make a positive impact in this fight, protecting our future and that of future generations.

Colorado is an official Earth Hour state, with a commitment from Governor Bill Ritter to turn out the lights in the state capitol building and governor's residence in Denver. INVESCO Field at Mile High also will go dark. Local governments, businesses, colleges, schools and households are also pledging to turn off their lights for Earth Hour.

In 2009, nearly 1 billion people turned out for Earth Hour, dousing lights in 4,100 cities in 87 countries, including 80 million Americans in 318 cities.

[More info, registration and social networking](#)

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## **Governor's Energy Office workshop on clean energy financing**

Thursday, April 8, 2010  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Eagle, exact location TBA

A regional meeting of community leaders on developing clean energy financing programs for rural counties. Featured speakers include Boulder County representatives of the ClimateSmart Loan Program, local government leaders working to activate voter-approved financing programs in Eagle, Pitkin and Gunnison counties, and Renewable Funding, a California company that offers a turnkey approach to financing programs.

A meeting location has not been determined. If you are interested in attending, please send an email to [events@CleanEnergyEconomy.net](mailto:events@CleanEnergyEconomy.net) and we will inform you of the selected location.

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## **Save the dates: Rifle hosts two grand opening events for new city facilities and solar arrays**

**Saturday, May 8**  
10 a.m.  
Rifle Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility

Grand opening for the new solar-powered wastewater treatment plant and the SunEdison solar array that powers the plant. Public tours of the new treatment facility will follow the grand opening ceremony.

**Monday, May 10**  
Time TBA  
Rifle Parks Maintenance Facility, Deerfield Park

Grand opening for the new energy-efficient and solar-powered parks maintenance facility and solar array, one of three new small arrays funded by the Garfield New Energy Communities Initiative.

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## **Save the date: The Compelling Case for Natural Gas Vehicles**

Tuesday, May 18  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Crowne Plaza Hotel at DIA, 15500 E. 40th Ave., Denver  
Fee: \$55 through May 13; \$65 late registration  
Register: <http://www.cleanvehicle.org/workshop/Denver.shtml>  
Lodging at group rate at Crowne Plaza, \$119:  
call by April 17 to book at this rate, (303) 371-9494

This one-day workshop for owners of public and private sector fleets covers natural gas vehicles on the market, best applications for the job, info on tax incentives and grants, economics of an NGV program, fueling stations, and advice from operators of NGV fleets. Workshop ends with a tour of a nearby CNG facility.

[Event flyer with topic summary](#) | [Preliminary agenda](#)

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## Clean Energy Bits `n Bobs

### Piper Foster's latest dispatch from Germany

shares the idea of bicycle couriers, which are widespread. "The average postal mail carrier in Germany delivers 7,000 letters a week -- on a bike. Despite an average rainfall 80 inches per year, cold temperatures, and a winter with diminished daylight, there are 26,000 bikes in the Deutsche Post mail delivery fleet. It is not uncommon for the bike's saddlebags, full of mail, to weigh 132 pounds. Of Deutsche



Post's 54,000 mail delivery employees, 50 percent use bikes to bring 71 million letters per week to their recipients. Customers may buy a carbon offset for each letter they send. Pharmacies and pizza joints also employ bike deliverers.

[Read the rest of the story on Piper's blog](#)

**Rifle Mayor Keith Lambert**, a member of the Garfield New Energy Communities Advisory Board, clean energy champion and member of the Governor's Climate Change Advisory Panel, was interviewed on Colorado Matters, a statewide radio program aired by Colorado Public Radio. Lambert talked about the city's effort to diversify its economy with renewable energy at its new Energy Innovation Center. The program, *Changing the Energy Landscape in Rifle*, aired March 2. [Click here](#) and scroll down to March 2 to hear the interview.

The **Go Green Team at Kathryn Senor Elementary** in New Castle is holding a fundraiser car wash to buy trees for the playground. Drop by the Vista auto dealerships in West Glenwood on Saturday, March 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a \$5 car wash. Green Team volunteers note that washing a car at a car wash with biodegradable soap and a water filtering system is better for the environment compared to washing a car on the street and letting the soap run into the unfiltered storm drain system.



The new **Basalt Library** is open, and it's well worth a visit to check out the energy efficiency and renewable energy features. The library, designed by **A4 Architects** of Carbondale, uses recycled and locally sourced materials, efficient windows, high levels of insulation, advanced lighting and HVAC systems and extensive natural light. A 76-kilowatt solar electric system, installed by **Sol**

**Energy**, will provide 95 percent of the buildings electrical needs, and a DECK monitoring system in the entrance lobby displays the system's power generation.

CLEER | P.O. Box 428 | Carbondale, Colorado 81623 | (970) 704-9200