

# **Eagle County Extends Eco-Build Rebates to Community-Owned Solar**

**Last week the Eagle County Board of County Commissioners approved a modification to the ECO-Build Rebate program allowing community-owned or “offsite” solar customers to apply for the same incentives as rooftop or “on-site” customers.**

Posted by Staff

The ECO-Build regulations were adopted to promote energy efficient building design and construction practices. However, when the guidelines were drafted off-site or community-owned solar was not a possibility. In a program that's the first of its kind in the nation, the Clean Energy Collective (CEC) created a model that allows Holy Cross Energy customers to collectively buy into a community-based solar garden and reap the benefits without having to build a system of their own. Members leverage their collective purchasing power to buy as much clean energy as they choose at reduced prices, and are directly credited on their HCE electric bills. It also offers members the same tax credits and rebates as those who put solar panels on their homes or businesses.

The County decision will now allow Eagle County residents who purchased solar in CEC's recently built Mid-Valley Community Solar Array in El Jebel to apply for the additional rebate under the 2010 program, which will mean a rebate of \$2/watt up to 2kW, or a total of \$4000, for each member.

“This is a big step forward for community owned solar owners being treated the same as customers with rooftop systems,” said CEC founder Paul Spencer. Eagle County Environmental Policy Planner Adam Palmer commented “We're fine supporting this and think it's a great model.”

Eagle County commissions also approved lowering the rebate amount in 2011 to \$1/watt, up to \$2,000, for every applicant in the program, including community solar customers. Prices for solar PV have come down dramatically in the past year and the County felt that it was appropriate to serve as many customers as possible with the program.

The CEC just received final approval for a utility-scale solar array located on a 5-acre

parcel at the Garfield County Airport in Rifle. This array will be the second community-owned clean energy facility in the CEC's portfolio, and the largest private array in Colorado. The \$1 Eagle County rebate will reduce the cost of up to a 2 kW system to a record low of \$2.45/Watt through the CEC. With the first array selling out in a few weeks, the CEC expects this to generate strong demand in the Garfield facility.

“I love the fact that we can own solar power that will be maintained, up to date, and hassle free. This program allows us to pay attention to the environment and use green energy with the experts supporting us along the way,” said CEC customer Katie Ertl.