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First Community-Owned Solar Garden Launches in Roaring Fork Valley

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CARBONDALE –Senator Gail Schwartz, Holy Cross Energy CEO Del Worley, Basalt Mayor Leroy Duroux, key representatives from the Mid-Valley Metro District, and community organizations CORE and CLEER were on hand to cheer the groundbreaking for the Mid-Valley Community Solar Array in El Jebel last Thursday.

Reported by David A. Hill

The organization behind the effort is Clean Energy Collective of Carbondale, and it is the first of several sites the startup has in the works, which has developed the model for enabling a community to collectively own a clean energy facility—solar, wind, biomass, micro hydro—and directly reap the benefits.

“Colorado is leading the nation when it comes to attracting industry, attracting innovation, and attracting technology. This is one of the most important parts of it,” said Senator Gail Schwartz. “We actually have mechanisms now to make renewable energy affordable to all households.”

Holy Cross Energy CEO Del Worley was enthusiastic about the potential for locally-generated renewable energy. “It’s great to get local renewable energy off the ground, and this is one more arrow in our quiver for Holy Cross to meet its 20% goal of renewable energy by 2015,” he said.

Holy Cross’s residential and commercial customers are eligible to place reservations in the 80 kW Mid-Valley solar array for \$3.15/watt. Holy Cross will then credit members’ utility bills directly each month at \$.11/kWh based on how much solar each member owns in the array.

“We are extremely thankful to our partner Holy Cross Energy for continuing to execute on its commitment to clean energies and collaborating with us on this innovative initiative,” said CEC founder Paul Spencer.

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