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Clean Energy Collective Receives Approval for Third Community-Owned Solar Garden

Growth Accelerates for “Sweet Spot” of Renewable Energy Adoption

CARBONDALE, COLO (July 28, 2011) Commissioners in Eagle County, Colorado have given their blessing to the Clean Energy Collective to build its third community-owned solar garden, 4,160 panels on 5 acres of land in El Jebel, CO. When complete, the 1 MW “Tree Farm Array” will serve 200 – 300 community members in Colorado’s Roaring Fork and Vail valleys.

In a program that’s the first of its kind in the nation, the Clean Energy Collective model allows customers to reap the benefits of a community-based renewable energy facility without having to build a system of their own. Community-based energy eliminates many barriers by opening the doorway to ownership to everyone with electric service: property renters, non-profits, poorly-sighted properties and individuals of all incomes.

Last month the CEC flipped the switch on its Garfield County Airport Solar Array, an 858 kW facility in Rifle, CO and the largest community-owned solar array in the nation—producing over 1,500 MWh (1.5 GWh) of clean, renewable energy each year. The CEC’s pilot facility, a 78 kW facility in El Jebel, CO, started producing clean power for community owners last September.

Installed on a hillside bench that is shielded from view by cottonwood trees and other vegetation, the Tree Farm Array will add significantly to local utility Holy Cross Energy’s solar power portfolio. Serving communities including Aspen, Vail, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt and Rifle, Holy Cross is a leader among Colorado’s 22 electric distribution cooperatives in terms of installed capacity for renewable energy generation.

With the CEC’s first community solar garden selling out in a few weeks and more than a quarter of the Garfield County Airport Solar Array memberships sold since the June 14 opening, the CEC has proved that the community-owned, utility-scale model works. “They’re built faster than large solar farms, installation and maintenance costs are still relatively cheap, and our structure allows members to receive all of the rebates and tax incentives of home-sited systems,” explains CEC founder Paul Spencer. “You don’t even need a roof to adopt clean energy today, and the paybacks are higher than ever – both for the environment and financially” Spencer added.

Along with the addition of JP Morgan Chase as a financial partner, the CEC is also close to announcing a major agreement that will export this model to several other states.

About the Clean Energy Collective

The Clean Energy Collective is a developer of community-based renewable energy facilities and a leader in community power generation. The Colorado-based company is pioneering the model of delivering clean power-generation through large-scale facilities that are collectively owned by participating utility customers. The CEC’s proprietary RemoteMeter™ system automatically calculates monthly credits and integrates with existing utility billing systems, enabling all residential and commercial utility customers to easily have clean, renewable power credited on their monthly utility bills, without modifying their home or office. www.easycleanenergy.com

Topics: Solar
