

Visit us at SEEDSgroup.net



August 2022 Newsletter

Empowering Sustainable Communities

Upcoming Event

DIY Solar Tour September 10

SEEDS is pleased to announce the return of its DIY Solar Tour on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 9 AM to 3 PM.

There will be four stops on the tour starting in Wayne County's Damascus Township and ending in Dyberry Township. Participants drive their own vehicles to the sites, but upon [registration](#), participants can opt in to energy-saving carpooling opportunities.



Each stop on the tour is an example of a do-it-yourself solar installation, a mix of roof and ground-mount systems. Discussion at each location will cover various aspects of installing a solar system, from financials and paperwork to the mechanics of installation.



“One of the things I like about this tour is that participants will get to meet people who took steps to learn how to put up their own solar systems, thanks to our SEEDS DIY Solar Workshops,” says SEEDS Chair Katharine Dodge.

“They will share their experiences as well as a broad range of helpful information. So, whether you are interested in installing solar yourself or through a contractor, this is a great way to gain an understanding of the process.”

This tour is limited to 30 participants, so SEEDS urges anyone interested to not delay in signing up. A detailed itinerary will be sent after sign-up. To register, visit bit.ly/SEEDSDIYSolar.

The tour is free, but donations to SEEDS are always welcome. A mid-morning coffee break and a 1:00pm picnic lunch will be provided.

SEEDS offers [free solar assessments](#) to its members who live within the region. It offers this service to help homeowners avoid bad decisions and unscrupulous solar installers. To inquire about a solar assessment, email info@seedsgroup.net. For more information about SEEDS, visit www.seedsgroup.net.

Local News

Clean Energy Co-op signs solar installation agreements with Ritz Theater and Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wyoming Valley

Honesdale, PA – The Clean Energy Co-op, a Pennsylvania-based membership cooperative with a mission to promote renewable, sustainable

energy in Pennsylvania, has signed long-term contracts with two local non-profit community organizations to install and maintain solar panels on their buildings.



The Ritz Company Playhouse in Hawley.

The Ritz Company Playhouse in Hawley will receive a solar PV array consisting of 89 panels for a total of 40.5kW. This system will cover all of the theater's annual electric consumption, with extra left over to feed back into the electric grid.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wyoming Valley in Luzerne County, as part of their 'Greening of the Sanctuary' initiative, will receive a



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Wyoming Valley in Luzerne County

planned 20.58 kW array, consisting of three rows of 14 panels. The array is expected to generate more than two-thirds of their annual electricity needs after their recent conversion from fuel oil to electric heat pumps.

Construction for both projects is expected to start this autumn. For more information about the Clean Energy Co-op, please go [here](#).

About the Clean Energy Co-op

At the for-profit, member owned Co-op, community benefits take priority over profits. The Co-op uses a "slow money" investment strategy, where long-term and modest returns are acceptable – even desirable -- because the invested money circulates locally, and provides many other benefits to the members, investors and our communities. The Co-op has paid a 2% annual dividend on its preferred shares since 2016. The Co-op presently has 150 members across the state.

Co-op Completed Projects



The Cooperage Project, 2015

The Solar PV system includes 90 solar panels (27.45 kilowatts in total) and produces more than 100% of the annual electrical use in the building. The Cooperage is not only a community hub and beautiful performance space; it is an open classroom, a market, a gathering place, and most important, a place where everyone is welcome.

The Anthill Farm Agroforestry, 2017

The Co-op has successfully financed a 37.8kW solar PV system to go on the barn roof at the Anthill Farm Agroforestry. The exciting thing is that Anthill's loan payments, along with sales of excess electricity, are lower than their previous annual electricity bills. All by clean, renewable energy.



Willow Wisp Organic Farm, 2018



Owner Greg Swartz says "Solar energy makes sense for us. As a farm, we harvest solar energy when growing our produce, and using solar-generated electricity to run our irrigation pumps, refrigeration, and other needs is just another step in improving the sustainability for our farm, our community and our world."

The Stourbridge Project, 2020

The Stourbridge Project is a community-based initiative that transformed the former Stourbridge Elementary School in Honesdale into a business incubator/accelerator with a public co-working space. [Here](#) Co-op President Chris Weigand is featured accepting a PA Environmental Award for the solar array at The Stourbridge Project.



For more information, visit the Co-op's website at www.cleanenergy.coop -- that's not .com, not .org, but .coop!

Upcoming Event

Farm & Chef is Back October 2nd!

SEEDS is thrilled to collaborate with other local sustainability organizations to bring back the popular Farm & Chef event, scheduled for October 2nd, 2022. To be held at the Cooperage in Honesdale, PA, this event showcases seven of the region's finest chefs preparing small plates featuring local, fresh produce and food from area farmers and producers, as well as live music, an old fashioned pie auction, a basket raffle, food-

ask that you pre-register by contacting Jack Barnett, provide a very brief written description or story, and bring a list of all ingredients. Please note that return of the pie plate/pan is unlikely.

On October 2, Help Setup or Cleanup

Setup/Decorating

Starts at 9am before doors open at noon

Cleanup

Needed starting at 4:30-ish to be completed by 7pm

On October 2, Additional Help

Staff the door

Collect money/check tickets/answer questions. Shifts available: 12pm-1pm, 1pm-2pm, 2pm-3pm, and 3pm-4pm

Sell/serve beer & wine

Must be RAMP certified (multiple shifts available)

Sell basket raffle tickets

Overlapping 45 mins shifts 12pm-4pm)

Misc tasks/runners

To volunteer for any of the above roles for Farm & Chef, or for more information about the roles, please contact Jack Barnett at jack@SEEDSgroup.net or call 908-963-1619.

If you are a business owner and you are willing to display a poster or trifold brochures advertising the event, please reach out to Jack Barnett as well.

#SEEDSGoodNews

White House Announces Six Initiatives on Solar Energy Access and Jobs

Last week the White House released a fact sheet on Six New Actions to Lower Electricity Bills for Working Families. Using funds made available by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that was passed in November 2021, these actions aim to “[c]onnect more states and families to affordable, reliable solar projects and create clean energy jobs,” citing energy costs as putting excessive strain on already hard hit American families.

The actions include three that focus on lowering electricity costs for American families, including: guidance for families receiving HUD-assisted rental housing to connect with community solar projects; six states will pilot



“the Low-Income Community Solar Subscription Platform”; and “a new initiative to help small rural housing authorities make money-saving energy efficiency upgrades.” The other three actions focus on creating clean energy jobs, including: funding for a “program to

support new workforce programs that expand union density and increase participation from underserved and underrepresented groups in the rapidly growing solar industry”; the new [Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar](#); and HUD regional offices will convene stakeholders in their regions over the next 90 days to highlight federal funding sources.”

Read the [White House’s full fact sheet here](#). Read the Department of Energy’s explanation of the actions, their goals and incentives [here](#). For more information on the National Community Solar Partnership and how they work to bring community solar access to more American households, [go here](#). While Pennsylvania still does not have legislation enabling Community Solar projects in the state yet, federal actions like these are working to bring community solar closer to a universal reality everywhere.

And if you find yourself talking with anyone running for a Pennsylvania state representative office, ask them where they are with Community Solar

legislation for Pennsylvanians—specifically [House Bill 1555](#) and [Senate Bill 472](#), which would amend Title 66 which governs public utilities and allow for Community Solar.

National News

Supreme Court Ruling Limits Agency's Regulatory Powers, Demands for Climate Action Continue

Just over a month ago, the Supreme Court closed out their latest session with *West Virginia v EPA*, and a ruling that seemingly came down against regulatory efforts to combat climate catastrophe in the United States. In the month since the ruling, many individuals and organizations have sifted through the decision, analyzed it, and offered interpretations and predictions for how the highest court of the land may have impacted the country's ability to mediate the worst effects of climate change.

[This article](#) from [Earth Justice](#) provides an in-depth explanation of the ruling, as well as offer actionable “next steps” for both the EPA and climate activists. [This article](#) by climate journalist [Naomi Klein](#) analyzes the ruling in the context of a larger view of contemporary politics. For President Biden's initial response to the ruling, see [this statement put out by the White House](#) in the first days after it came down.

But there are many who maintain that while a blow to efficiency in the government's efforts to mediate the effects of climate change, the ruling was not an all-out defeat. In other words, it could have been much, much worse. In an interview appearing in [this Atlantic article](#), Michael Wara, a climate and energy policy scholar from Stanford, explained that, “It doesn't limit EPA from regulating greenhouse-gas emissions in general, which was a possibility in this case.” In this [NPR interview with EPA Administrator Michael Regan](#), he explains that while the ruling was “disappointing,” he

and the agency remain optimistic about the future and the work to be done.

If you are looking for more actionable steps to take in response to the ruling, scroll down (or [go here](#)) to read a #SEEDSBlogPost from SEEDS member Chris Weigand on how to select green sources for your electricity through your power company. [This link](#) will take you to [Earth Justice's](#) letter campaign to congress requesting legislative action in regard to climate change. To read about [Third Act](#), climate activist Bill McKibbin's organization targeting a membership of "experienced American" aged 60 years and older, or become a member, [visit this site](#).

While the *West Virginia v EPA* ruling may have created barriers to federally regulating conditions that contribute to climate change, there are many more paths forward, many communities uniting together towards that future, and much good news along the way.

Local News

With Team Training Complete, TEAMM Assessments Kick Off

by Zoe Spaide and Holly Zaluski

SEEDS officially kicked off our popular energy conservation program TEAAM (The Energy Awareness Action Movement) at the end of June with the completion of our assessment team training. The TEAAM program was developed to work with residents in the region to encourage energy conservation in a home. Our team of volunteers and student intern successfully completed a comprehensive training program consisting of virtual and hands-on training. During the hands-on portion of the training, three local residents kindly offered their homes where the assessment team was able to apply their

knowledge and communicate any energy inefficiencies found to the homeowner. After the training, our wonderful group of volunteers felt that they had gained valuable information and realized the importance of guiding homeowners towards a more energy efficient lifestyle.



Our team is currently in search of residents in the region that may be interested in receiving a free home energy assessment through the TEAAM program. An assessment will help residents conserve

energy, improve their home's comfort level and save money! Our assessment team will inspect the interior and exterior of the residence and provide simple steps and advice for improving the home's energy efficiency. With the cost of electricity rising significantly, this free service is a great opportunity to save money on



utility bills. If you are interested in reducing your energy usage, improving your home's comfort level and health, and reducing spending on your energy bills, sign up for an assessment today! Those interested may contact our program Coordinator, Zoe Spaide, at zoe@seedsgroup.net, or fill out this form bit.ly/SEEDSAssessment.

Here is our student intern, Holly (above), and our program coordinator, Zoe (left), in their new TEAAM uniforms. They are ready to go!

#SEEDSBlog

#SEEDSGoodNews

Choosing Your Electric Generation Company

by Chris Weigand

In addition to conserving power and perhaps even generating some of our own, we have a choice of where we buy our electricity and how that electricity is generated. In northeast PA, PPL still distributes our power but we can choose to buy the electricity we use from any company who is licensed in Pennsylvania. Those companies often offer a variety of products. Recently, my chosen supplier, Clean Currents, went out of business. I was automatically switched back to PPL with no break in service. However, I wanted to choose another supplier who offers renewable energy from local sources.

I visited <http://www.papowerswitch.com/> and chose "shop for electricity." I found 74 products available to me as a PPL customer. It can be overwhelming to sort through these but, fortunately, there is a search engine to help refine the process.



Chris Weigand is a SEEDS member, a retired math teacher and Clean Energy Coop President.

Because I am interested in renewable energy, I chose that under "Special Programs." This narrowed my options to 29 products. I further refined my search by choosing Renewable PA so that my electricity will come from local wind and solar projects within Pennsylvania. I slid the button from 0% to 100% renewable energy and came up with 5 products to explore.

After further research on the websites of each company, I decided on Ethical Energy. They are Green-e certified (a national, third-party certification for renewable energy), a member of Green America (<http://www.greenamerica.org/>) and a B Corporation (certified by the nonprofit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency). I had a choice of a 3-

month rate of 9.945 cents per kilowatt-hour or locking in at 11.67 cents/kWh for 12 months. There is no cancellation fee should I decide to switch again in the future.

When you do your own search on PA Power Switch, you can narrow down your results based on PA renewable or national renewable and what percentage of the power comes from renewable sources, fixed or variable price, length of term, no cancellation fee, and more. Results can be printed and/or exported to a spreadsheet for ease of comparison. When comparing plans I encourage you to click on the company's website and explore each plan further. Often the price quoted on the PA Power Switch site is not the same for all of the choices a company might offer.

In conclusion, when researching electricity suppliers it's important to be aware of a few things. There is no cost from PPL to switch to a different supplier. However, your new supplier may charge you if you want to switch from them "early." Also, you will still pay a distribution charge to PPL (about 4 cents per kilowatt hour) in addition to fees associated with the service of the lines. Your electric bill will still come from PPL and will include their charges as well as charges from your chosen supplier. All suppliers, including PPL, adjust their rates periodically. You need to be aware of when that will happen for your chosen company and product. Electric Choice in PA is an opportunity to be a responsible consumer of electricity and to support renewable energy in Pennsylvania and in the United States.

Do you have an idea for a **#SEEDSBlog** post? if you have experience, expertise or research in an area relevant to sustainable energy, living, education and or outreach, email us at newsletter@seedsgroup.net and share your idea!

#SEEDSGoodNews

Great News from the Federal Government, and how Public Pressure Works!

The original draft of SEEDS August Newsletter included a #SEEDSGoodNews story featuring the US Postal Service's recent decision to increase the percentage of electric vehicles in its new vehicle purchases for its fleet from 10% to 40%. This increase of four fold from its original plan earlier this year was the result of enormous public pressure citing climate concerns over the carbon emissions of the largest fleet of federal civilian vehicles in the country. [According to the Washington Post](#), "16 states, the District of Columbia, and four of the nation's top environmental groups sued the mail agency in the spring to prevent the original purchase plan, or compel it to buy more electric trucks." The article quotes Adrian Martinez, an attorney for Earthjustice, one of the activist groups bringing suit, explaining that attitudes surrounding the fleet updates have shifted due to public pressure.

This story was enough good news from the federal government, but then we got even bigger news.

In the last days of July the news of an agreement between Senator Schumer and Senator Manchin on the Inflation Reduction Bill surprised everyone. If passed, this bill would be the most ambitious plan to fight climate catastrophe put forth by any government to date, with over \$385 billion dollars dedicated to it. While the proposed bill still needs to pass both houses before being signed into law, by working with Manchin on this revamped version of Build Back Better, Congress is in a stronger position to get the votes it needs to pass. For a detailed breakdown of what it is in the bill, including substantial subsidies and incentives for electric cars, heat pumps and other energy saving purchases, see this [Washington Post story](#), [this NPR interview](#) with Senator John Hickenlooper of Colorado; or check out this [statement from President Biden](#) about the bill.

The bill is not without criticism from environmentalist positions, with [some claiming the bill contains "poison pills."](#) While the bill does include

provisions for fossil fuel procurement, Dr. Leah Stokes, professor of environmental politics at University of California, Santa Barbara, retorted, “We cannot let perfect be the enemy of the good,” and further explained that by allowing the bill to work to reduce dependence on fossil fuels it will erode the demand for those fossil fuels. Watch her [explain more fully here](#).

Many have been wondering why the turn around from [the Senator who killed the Build Back Better Bill](#), and no one can say for sure, but it seems public pressure on climate concerns has played a significant role. So if you don't already, keep your state and federal [representatives contact info](#) in your phone, or otherwise handy, and remember to reach out on issues that matter to you—like affordable renewable energy access, and government spending that prioritizes a livable climate for the future. And if you think 40% is too low a number for new electric vehicle purchases by the Postal Service, go to the [Climate Reality Project](#) to participate in [their campaign to demand even more electric vehicles](#) in the fleet.

#SEEDSGoodNews

Do you have any #SEEDSGoodNews stories to share with the SEEDS community? Send them to us at newsletter@seedsgroup.net or tag us on social media! They can be local stories from your community, or stories from around the world--anything to celebrate and spread the word about the progress of energy efficiency, renewable energy or sustainable living wherever you hear about it!

SEEDS Events

Mark Your Calendar

SEEDS 2022 Annual Meeting September 7

This year's annual meeting for SEEDS membership will be held on Wednesday September 7 at 5pm. The meeting will be held in an outdoor location to be finalized shortly. SEEDS will disseminate more details about the annual meeting using email and social media platforms. All members are invited to attend.

11th Annual Free Book Swap October 6-10

SEEDS annual free Book Swap is being held at the Wayne County Fair Grounds from Thursday October 6th through Monday October 10th. Bring books you no longer want, get as many free books as you can carry away, or both. More details about the event are forthcoming, but in the meantime see [this posting looking for volunteers](#) to help with the event, and contact Jenna Mauder if interested at jenna@seedsgroup.net. Consider donating books, or consider donating your time to this unique SEEDS event that celebrates community and sustainability!

If you are not a member of SEEDS, please consider [joining us](#) today!

You can use this link to share our membership page with others:

<https://seedsgroup.net/become-a-member/>



You will continue to receive our newsletters, invitations to our educational forums and other events. Members are eligible for free solar evaluations, have

voting rights at our annual meeting, and help shape our programs and initiatives. For more information visit our website at www.seedsgroup.net.

Copyright © 2022 SEEDS-Sustainable Energy Education and Development Support, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you signed up to be on the SEEDS mailing list.

Our mailing address is:

SEEDS-Sustainable Energy Education and Development Support
1030 Main Street
Honesdale, PA 18431