



Acorn Energy Co-op e-News

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Member Owned
Renewable Energy Products and Services

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Dear ,

This is the 34th edition of the Acorn Energy Co-op's e-Newsletter, published periodically to keep you apprised of happenings in the Co-op and informed of upcoming events. This month we focus on the Co-op's many solar offerings.

See below for news about:

- Tour of the 2013 Solar Decathlon House - **this Saturday!**
- Solar PV options
- Community Solar Projects
- Lifetime Member Profile - Mike Lynch

Finally, we encourage you to visit our website frequently at www.acornenergycoop.com to access the wealth of information about energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other money-saving strategies available there.

Please pass this e-Newsletter along to friends, neighbors and family who may not be aware of the Co-op and its activities and plans.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

The Acorn Energy Co-op Team



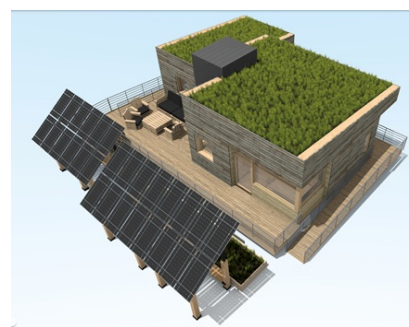
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Solar Decathlon House Tour on Saturday

Looking for some insight into an energy-efficient, solar-powered home? **Come tour "InSite," the Middlebury College Team's entry for this year's Solar Decathlon on Saturday, August 3 from 1-4 p.m.** The house is currently located in the parking lot off Ridgeline Road, directly across from Bicentennial Way on Route 125. After the competition in October, the house will reside permanently on Shannon Street.

The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon challenges collegiate teams to design, build, and operate solar-powered houses that are cost-effective, energy-efficient, and attractive. The winner of the competition is the team that best blends affordability, consumer appeal, and design excellence with optimal energy production and maximum efficiency.

"InSite" is a thoughtful expression of living within a community: a community of family and the wider community. The house features lots of room for communal space, large, street-facing windows, and a unique solar pathway which allows space for a green roof.



Other interesting features include a centralized mechanical "chimney," reclaimed barn wood siding, and maple floors harvested from the Middlebury College-owned forest in Ripton and milled in Bristol.

Acorn Energy Co-op sponsored a presentation by members of the team at Ilsley Library back in June. Attendees were impressed with the team's thoughtful and innovative design and are eager to see the house in person. A video of the June presentation can be found by clicking [here](#).

We hope to see you this Saturday!

Save Money on Your Electric Bill With Solar PV

There has never been a better time to go solar. The cost of solar panels has dropped substantially in recent years and now is a great time to take advantage of those low prices. The cost of electricity is likely to continue to increase in the years ahead, and a solar installation on your home can reduce or virtually eliminate your monthly electric bill.



The Borden/O'Donohue family

That's what Energy Co-op members Laurie Borden and her family discovered when they had a **new Solar PV system installed at their Weybridge home recently**. Acorn Energy Co-op partner/installer Green Earth Energy, the solar division of the well-established (1987)

McKernon Group of Brandon, custom designed and installed the Borden family's new 8 kW ground mounted solar array.

"Green Earth Energy/McKernon, Jim, Davis and Eric were very responsive, informative and trustworthy. They made the whole process (including all the necessary paperwork) so user friendly," Laurie says. **"Our first electric bill-which previously varied from \$130-\$210 per month-was only \$16.50!"**

You can save money on your electric bill too! Go Solar! If you need assistance with financing, we can help. Through a special arrangement with the National Bank of Middlebury, qualified borrowers may finance all or a part of the solar PV system. Loan applications are available at any National Bank of Middlebury office or by requesting an application by emailing loans@nbmvt.com.

For more information on how to reduce your fossil fuel consumption and receive electricity from the sun, call us for details at (802) 385-1911 or send an email inquiry to: info@acornenergycoop.com.

Community Solar Projects Update



Acorn Energy Solar One (AESO)

The most visible example of Acorn Energy's many solar initiatives is Acorn Energy Solar One (AESO), the 148 kW Community Solar array which has been successfully operating behind the Middlebury Police Station since December 2011.

Since developing that project, we have been hard at work with our partner, Encore Redevelopment of Burlington, searching for hosts for similar projects. Encore brings a wealth of experience in larger, **community-scale solar photovoltaic projects**, plus a key ingredient - financing. We look for one- or four-acre sites (for 150 or 500 kW projects respectively), which are near GMP three-phase electric lines and have a good, unobstructed southern solar exposure. Ideally, we want to find a host that has enough electrical demand to accept the output of either project size. When we find a host with power demand less than what the project can generate, we try to locate more "off-takers" who can use that additional power.

Encore not only installs the project at no cost to the host, but provides a combination lease and power discount each year for 25 years. Some of the hosts we are talking to are interested in owning the project after seven years, so the agreement allows them to buy it for fair market value, providing an excellent return on their investment.

When the Securities and Exchange Commission finally implements its Crowd Funding rules for investors, we hope that this new financial tool will make more locally funded Community Solar projects possible.

At the present time we are working with potential hosts and off-takers in about a dozen towns in Addison and Rutland counties.

Lifetime Member Profile - Mike Lynch

Since 2009, Mike Lynch of Ferrisburgh has been a lifetime member of Acorn Renewable Energy Co-op. Over the past four

years, Mike has taken advantage of the Energy Co-op's [Solar Hot Water discount](#), referenced the online [resource directory](#), kept abreast of the latest energy developments in Addison County and Vermont through the co-op newsletter, and sought advice from the Co-op's experts about energy improvements in his home.



Mike Lynch

When he bought his house, Mike was impressed by the thorough insulation, top quality windows, and noticeable passive solar gain from its well-planned southern exposure. But, after seeing an AEC solar hot water demo in Middlebury, he was intrigued by the prospect of taking a first step toward energy independence, and decided to install a system on an addition he was planning.

Upon learning about the Co-op's 30% member discount on a high quality solar hot water system from Stiebel Eltron, and pleased by AEC's work in bringing renewable energy options to Addison County, **he purchased a system and became a lifetime supporter of the Co-op's efforts.**

Mike's SHW system helped dramatically reduce his electricity bills. "Month after month for the entire first year we spent significantly less than we had the previous year," he says. Energized by that project's success, he purchased a new, more efficient furnace with help and advice from the Co-op's experts. Now he is considering replacing several old appliances with newer, more efficient ones, and perhaps having an energy audit done on his home.

Mike continues to make lifestyle choices that reduce his use of fossil fuels, like riding his motorcycle when possible, replacing a large vehicle with a smaller, more efficient one, and being mindful of keeping the thermostat reasonably low in the winter.

The best way to begin making changes, Mike says, **"is to do one thing. Choose one improvement and make it happen, one step at a time."** With advice and encouragement from Acorn Energy Co-op, one step at a time can be that much easier.

Upcoming Events

Renewable Energy 2013

October 28-29

Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center, South Burlington, VT

Renewable Energy 2013 is the largest and most comprehensive renewables conference & expo in Vermont. Now its 12th year, this annual event brings together key players in the renewables sector from across the region along with community leaders, policy makers and concerned citizens. Vermont is calling for 90% renewables by 2050. Meeting this goal requires collaboration, coordination and close review of factual data. Implementing the State's comprehensive energy plan demands a significant shift in how we think about, use and produce energy. Renewable Energy 2013 will look at the changes required to meet this goal. Reaching 90% means generating more renewables, upgrading distribution and transmission systems, wasting less energy, switching to electric cars, and approaching

planning in a more comprehensive and sustainable manner. For conference info, click [here](#).

2013 Vermont Home Energy Challenge

Sign Up Today! Efficiency Vermont, in partnership with the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network, is seeking local organizations to champion the Challenge in their communities and to sign up to participate. Under the Challenge, local organizations will foster public awareness about energy saving opportunities in the home and will set a target of weatherizing 3% of the homes in their community over the course of a year. Towns will then be able to measure their progress toward their goals along with that of other communities in their region and across the state. At the end of the year, towns will be recognized and awarded for the effectiveness of their efforts to encourage participation in their communities. Visit www.encyvermont.com/homeenergychallenge for details. For more information, contact pmarkowitz@veic.org.

Some Helpful Links to More Renewable Energy Information

RENEWABLE ENERGY VERMONT

Visit Renewable Energy Vermont's website for summaries on statewide renewable energy initiatives and incentives and professional training opportunities. REV is comprised of renewable energy companies, institutional and academic partners and concerned citizens of Vermont working to ensure the expansion of renewable energy statewide. Contact REV to locate your local renewable energy professional. REV members are available to speak to schools and civic groups on the many benefits of renewable energy.



EFFICIENCY VERMONT

Efficiency Vermont provides technical assistance and financial incentives to Vermont households and businesses, to help them reduce their energy costs with energy-efficient equipment and lighting and with energy-efficient approaches to construction and renovation.



For years it focused on improving electrical costs. Several years ago it expanded and helped Vermont launch **Button Up! Vermont** to help homeowners improve the thermal envelope of their buildings for improved heating and cooling. You can go to its website and click on "**Ask the Home Team**" for common sense answers to your building efficiency questions.

In addition, don't miss the current Efficiency Vermont supported deals in your local hardware store on all types of efficient CFL and LED lighting.

Thank you again for your continued support and enthusiasm. Our member-owned co-op continues to grow thanks to people like you. If you have specific questions about the Co-op, please e-mail us at info@acomenergycoop.com or call us at 802-385-1911.

Sincerely,

Peter Carothers, President
Acorn Energy Co-op