



# Acorn Energy Co-op e-News

Issue No. 37

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Member Owned  
Renewable Energy Products and Services

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Dear ,

This is the 37th 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.

See below for news about:

- New Energy Co-op Cold Climate Heat Pump Initiative
- EV Charging Stations
- Weatherization success story
- Election of New Officers

Finally, we encourage you to visit our website frequently at [www.acornenergycoop.com](http://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

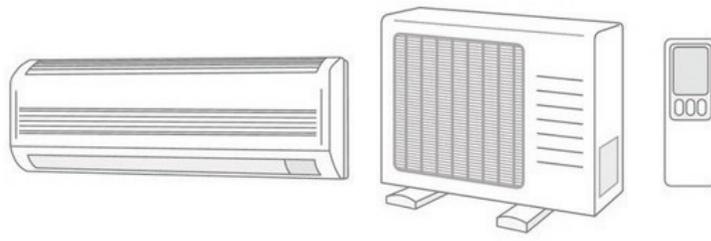


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## Co-op to Offer Cold Climate Heat Pump Discounts to Members

As you may recall, our February newsletter was headed with an article on an exciting new Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) technology known as **Cold-Climate Heat Pumps** (CCHP). This was followed in March by a presentation at our annual meeting on "mini-split" CCHPs, the most common type of installation of this new technology.

After months of careful research, we are excited to announce that we are about to launch a new Cold-Climate Heat Pump initiative for our members. **We are finalizing partnerships** with two highly-respected weatherization installer/contractors who will offer Acorn Energy Co-op members very attractive discounts. We'll be providing more details soon, but wanted you to know that the program is coming.



Indoor unit

outdoor unit

controller

CCHP ductless mini-split heat pumps have an outdoor unit connected by small copper tubes and electrical control wires to one (or more) indoor units. Due to their relative simplicity (no air ducts required), mini-splits have a modest (around \$3,500) price tag. These mini-splits are often installed in homes and offices to supplement existing heat systems, usually in the most frequently used rooms, such as a family room. Over the course of a typical Vermont winter, heat pumps can deliver up to three units of heat for every unit of electricity used (a remarkable 300% efficiency) resulting in significant fuel cost savings.

A [study](#) published last year by Efficiency Maine, has a section covering system paybacks that can run between two and three years depending on your current heating fuel: [www.energymaine.com/renewable-energy/heat-pumps](http://www.energymaine.com/renewable-energy/heat-pumps).

Sound exciting? Stay tuned!

### More EV Chargers Coming!

The number of electric vehicle charging stations in Vermont continues to grow! Governor Shumlin recently announced grants to construct **twelve new Level-2 chargers** in six different downtowns, and **one Level-3 fast charger**. The grants announced are for Barre, Bennington, Burlington, Middlebury, Morristown, and St. Albans, which each received grants of up to \$30,000 to construct parking, signage, and other infrastructure for two Level-2 chargers. Level-2 chargers are supplied with 220 volts, and deliver up to 7,200 watts of power, enough to fill the batteries in most EV's in two to four hours.

In addition, a Level-3 charger will be built in Burlington. Level-3 chargers, sometimes referred to as "fast chargers," will charge EV's equipped with a Level-3 charge port in about 30 minutes. The Acorn Energy Co-op participated in the writing of the Middlebury grant, and construction of the Middlebury chargers is expected to begin soon in the parking lot on Mill Street, across from The Storm Café.

Another round of grants for chargers is expected to be announced later this year, as the state continues to support the expansion of EV charging infrastructure. In addition to this state support, more private stations are coming on-line as well, notably two more Level-2 chargers in the Lakeview Garage (the Macy's parking garage) in Burlington, and the first Level-3 charger in



the state at Freedom Nissan in South Burlington.

The number of EV's in Vermont has doubled each year for the past few years, and is expected to continue to double each year until at least 2017, so this new charging infrastructure is a welcome and needed addition, and an important part of our state's renewable-energy transportation future. The Acorn Energy Co-op will continue to support this expansion of EV charging infrastructure.

### Weatherization Success Story - Gwen and Andy Nagy- Benson

Before investing in any heating or cooling upgrades or renewable energy projects, experts have long urged homeowners to weatherize first; it makes good sense to stop air leaks and increase a home's efficiency before purchasing a new system. If you don't, you might buy a system that is bigger than you actually need. And weatherization is often the easiest and most cost effective way to curb your carbon output.

Gwen and Andy Nagy-Benson of Weybridge found this to be quite true. Their family had used an average of 900 gallons of heating oil each winter from November of 2009 to June of 2013. Their home always felt cold and the boiler ran constantly despite keeping the thermostat low in an attempt to control the fuel bills. They knew that their 1970s-vintage home was in need of comprehensive weatherization. The project was also complicated by a damp basement that leaked around the foundation.



In March of 2013, after an energy audit, they hired **Structural Energy Corporation**, an Acorn Energy Co-op partner, to install interior drains with a vapor barrier in the basement, rigid foam insulation on the basement walls, spray foam in the rim joists, and to seal air

leaks throughout the house. Additionally, in September of 2013, another Co-op partner, **Jim Adams** of Keystone Construction, air sealed the attic and added cellulose insulation.

This winter (remember how cold it was?), they used only 525 gallons of oil, a roughly 42% reduction! They **saved nearly \$1,000** in heating fuel costs over last year. Not only did they keep the thermostat higher this year than in prior years, but the boiler was quiet for long stretches of time. They could tell the house was holding its heat better - it simply was more comfortable. "We know this was money well spent - it will pay for itself in a few years," Gwen says.

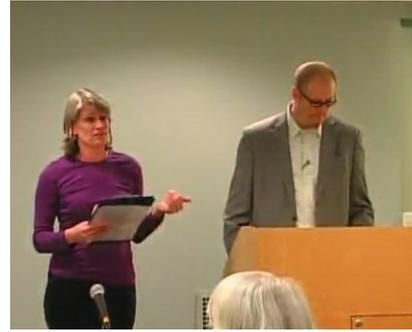
For advice about getting started on your own weatherization project, contact Gwen at the Acorn Energy Co-op (call 802-385-1911 or email to [info@acornenergycoop.com](mailto:info@acornenergycoop.com)) and she will be happy to steer you towards organizations and businesses that can help get your project underway.

### Socially Responsible Investing Panel a Success

The Socially Responsible Personal Investment panel, "Investing for the Greater Good," held the evening of Wednesday, April 9 at

the Ilsley Library Community Room in downtown Middlebury was a great success.

This well-attended event included Vermont State Treasurer, Beth Pearce; Tom Gainey, Pax World Management; Eric Becker, Clean Yield Asset Management; Shawn Oxford, Bristol Financial Services; and Rich Carpenter, Acorn Energy Co-op Treasurer. Jamie Gaucher, director Middlebury Business Development and Innovation, was the moderator.



Co-op board member Suzy Hodgson introduces moderator Jamie Gaucher.

Each panel member had a few minutes to make a brief presentation, followed by a moderated discussion, and then took a series of excellent questions from the over 50-person audience. If you missed it, a video of the event can be found [here](#). The Acorn Renewable Energy Co-op and the ACORN Network co-sponsored the event.

### New Officers Elected

At its April 21 meeting, the Acorn Energy Co-op board elected its officers for 2014-2015. There were a number of changes to the executive committee which is composed of board officers.

**Peter Carothers**, from New Haven, stepped down as president after serving in that capacity for two years. He moved into the newly-created position of vice-president for engineering. Peter was replaced by **Greg Pahl**, from Weybridge, as president, who stepped down as secretary after serving in that capacity for two years. Greg was replaced by **Benjamin Marks**, from Cornwall, as secretary, who joined the executive committee for the first time. **Richard Carpenter**, from Cornwall, was reelected as treasurer, and **Tom Dunne**, from Middlebury, was reelected as vice-president.

The board officers were elected unanimously by all directors present. They will serve for a one-year term through April 2015.

### Don't Forget - Join or Renew Online!

It's easy to **join the co-op or renew your membership** online at our [website](#). To join, click on "**Join Today**." To renew, enter your username (your email address) and click on "**Forgot Your Password**" to set up your password.

## Upcoming Events

### Seventh Annual Way to Go! Commuter Challenge

**Monday, May 12 - 16**

### Addison County Transit Resources, Middlebury

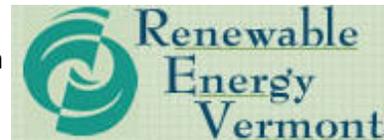
The seventh annual week-long Way to Go! Commuter Challenge will kick off Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Businesses and individual commuters can sign up now at [www.waytogovt.org](http://www.waytogovt.org) to Curb their Carbon for one week to save money and reduce air pollution. Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) is partnering with the statewide Way to Go! event to raise awareness of transportation options among commuters by encouraging them to travel in ways other than driving alone. Participants pledge to take the bus, bike, walk, rideshare or telecommute

during the week of the challenge. Prizes will be awarded including: gift certificates to restaurants, iPads and iPods, transit passes and more. Businesses of different sizes with the most behavior change for the week will be rewarded prestigious "Carbon Cup" trophies. To make it more fun, businesses, schools and other organizations can compete against each other for the most carbon savings. During Way to Go! week ACTR will have "Fare-Free Friday" on May 16th and once again donate fares to the United Way of Addison County. For more information on curbing carbon, go to [actr-vt.org](http://actr-vt.org) or call 388-2287.

## 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.

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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@acornenergycoop.com](mailto:info@acornenergycoop.com) or call us at 802-385-1911.

**Sincerely,**

Greg Pahl, President  
Acorn Energy Co-op