



# Acorn Energy Co-op e-News

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Member Owned  
Renewable Energy Products and Services

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## Join our list

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Dear ,

This is the 36th 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:

- Cold Climate Heat Pumps
- Sustainable Living Expo
- Co-op Annual Meeting
- Partner Profile - American Flatbread

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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## Cold Climate Heat Pumps - The Next Big Thing?

Air source heat pumps, long used in warmer climates for heating and cooling, historically have not been a viable option in colder climates due to their inefficiency at lower temperatures. With improved technology, however, cold climate heat pumps are now proving to be **an interesting and efficient solution to heating needs** in northern climates (even down to -15° Fahrenheit). Heat pumps work by taking energy from the outside air and moving it to an indoor space using a refrigeration cycle (similar to your refrigerator or air conditioner). Conversely, in the summer, they cool your home by removing heat from indoor air and expelling it to the outside.

Room unit ductless or "**mini-split**" heat pumps, connected to a larger unit outside, can work effectively



Indoor component of a Ductless Air-Source Heat Pump (courtesy Mitsubishi Electric Heating and Cooling)

in high-use rooms to offset a primary heating system, or to better heat or cool spaces in your home that are often colder (or warmer in the summer) than the main areas (like an addition). They can reduce your energy costs, given that electricity is currently more economical than other heating fuels, and, when coupled with a solar PV system, can reduce your use of fossil fuels even further.

Efficiency Maine has produced an excellent report examining and comparing the cost, efficiency and payback periods of home

heating options in a climate very similar to Vermont's. [Energy Efficient Heating Options: Pilot Projects and Relevant Studies](#) (April 8, 2013), compares basic air sealing and insulation, and cold climate heat pumps, among other strategies.

[Efficiency Vermont](#) offers a generous cold climate heat pump incentive program for former CVPS customers and is about to launch a new incentive program for people who currently use electric resistance heat. To find out whether a cold climate heat pump is right for your home, call Efficiency Vermont at 888-921-5990 or click [here](#) for more information and incentive details.

Come to the annual meeting (see article below) to hear a presentation by members of the co-op who have been researching cold climate heat pumps.

## Sustainable Living Expo

Acorn Energy Co-op and the ACORN Network will be presenting the **Sustainable Living Expo on Saturday, March 29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Middlebury Union High School.** This exciting one-day exposition of workshops, exhibits, and events will gather the community together to inspire each other to explore, design, and create a vibrant self-sustaining future, rooted in ourselves, our communities, and in nature. The Expo will bring together all the different members of our emerging sustainable community under one tent and provide opportunities for learning, listening, and conversation, and will offer a venue for networking, engagement, and collaboration.



There will be over 100 exhibits demonstrating sustainable products, services, and community resources; a dedicated

area for farmers and food exhibits; as well as non-profit displays and student projects.

We will announce the keynote speaker and additional details in the next edition of the newsletter. For more information, click [here](#) or contact Elizabeth Golden-Pidgeon, (802) 598-2388, [Elizabeth@ACORNVT.org](mailto:Elizabeth@ACORNVT.org)

### Co-op Annual Meeting set for March 27th



Join us for the **6th Acorn Renewable Energy Co-op Annual meeting to be held between 5 and 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 27** in the lower social room at Two Brothers Tavern, 86 Main Street in Middlebury. We'll begin the meeting with a presentation on cold climate heat pumps as well as some exciting initiatives that we have been working on.

Following the presentation, the Co-op will hold its annual business meeting, which will feature a report on the Co-op's activities to date, including a financial report by our treasurer, and election of the board by members.

But most of all, the annual meeting will provide an opportunity for you, advisory board members, and Co-op board members to get to know each other better and to share suggestions and ideas about the Co-op as we move into our sixth year of operation. **Free hors d'oeuvres** and a cash bar will be provided.

**All members in attendance will be entered into a raffle for a \$50 [Two Brothers Tavern](#) gift certificate.**

Please join us!

### Partner Profile - American Flatbread, Middlebury

In communion with people all over the world who use flour and water to make some version of flatbread, George Schenk, founder of [American Flatbread](#), developed in 1987 what has since become a Vermont staple.

With a philosophy centered on community, neighborliness, and earth stewardship, American Flatbread strives to create a fair and fun workplace, to be an educational resource in the community, and to support local, regional, and sustainable agriculture. Products from many Addison County farms and cheese makers are featured in the delicious, wood-fired flatbreads at the Middlebury location in the Marble Works. Dinner is served Tuesday through Saturday, 5-9 p.m.

Owners Danielle and Steve Boyce offer **Acorn Energy Co-op members a generous 10% off their food bill**. Come on over to the Middlebury hearth for some great local food and the chance to support a valuable community partner!



### 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

### Electric Vehicles and Vermont

**A Talk by Dr. Steve Letendre of Green Mountain College**

**Wednesday, February 5, 5:30 pm**

**GMP Energy Innovation Center, Merchants Row, Rutland**

Dr. Letendre's research involves the economic analysis of emerging environmental technologies and the development of policies and regulations to promote a sustainable energy future. He has published over 45 technical articles on a variety of energy issues and his research has been referenced in mainstream media, including the New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor. He has performed collaborative research with organizations from across the country, including the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, California Air Resources, the Solar Electric Power Association, and the University of Vermont's Transportation Research Center and has presented to the Vermont State Legislature on electric vehicles as part of a special series on global climate change.

### Attention Builders!

**Learn about your responsibilities under the VT Residential Energy Code**

**Friday, February 7, 9-11 am**

**Ilsley Library Community Room, Middlebury**

David Keefe from Efficiency Vermont will give a presentation. Sponsored by the Middlebury and Weybridge Energy Committees with support from Cambium Construction and SEC construction. For more information, contact Fran Putnam at 388-1644 or [fcspu@sover.net](mailto:fcspu@sover.net). FREE with coffee and donuts provided.

### Acorn Energy Co-op Annual Meeting

**Thursday, March 27, 5-7 p.m.**

**Lower Social Space, Two Brothers Tavern, Middlebury**

Co-op members who have been researching cold climate heat pumps will offer a brief presentation followed by a short business meeting. Free hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

All members in attendance will be entered in a raffle for a Two Brothers Tavern gift certificate.

### Sustainable Living Expo

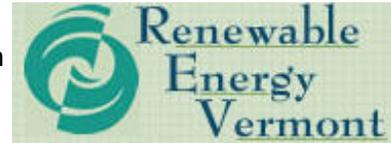
**Saturday, March 29, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Middlebury Union High School, Middlebury**

A one-day exposition of workshops, exhibits and events promoting sustainable living in the Champlain Valley. Why? To gather the community together with the purpose of inspiring each other to explore, design, and create a vibrant self-sustaining future, rooted in ourselves, in our communities, and in nature. Presented by [ACORN](#) and [Acorn Energy Co-op](#). For more information, click [here](#).

### [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,**

Peter Carothers, President  
Acorn Energy Co-op