



Acorn Energy Co-op e-News

Issue No. 40

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Member Owned
Renewable Energy Products and Services

In This Issue

[New Coordinator](#)

[New VT Energy Bill](#)

[InSite Potluck](#)

[Heating With Pellets](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Some Helpful Links](#)

Quick Links

[Archives of Past e-Newsletters & e-Blasts](#)

[Co-op Website](#)

[Join the Co-op](#)

[Order Pellets](#)

[List of Co-op Partners and Discounts](#)

Join our list

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Dear ,

This is the 40th 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 Coordinator
- Vermont Renewable Energy Bill
- New EV Charging Stations
- Heating With Wood Pellets

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



Like us on [Facebook!](#)

New Coordinator: Mary Mester

After a lengthy search and interview process, we are happy to announce that our new coordinator is Mary Mester, who just moved to Ripton from Leicester. Mary will be taking over from Gwen Nagy-Benson, who has been our coordinator for the past three years

Mary has many years of managerial experience in a wide range of jobs, including a Winery in Warwick, NY; a live plant nursery at an Agway store in Branchville, NJ; an activities manager at a resort, also in NJ; program director at several NJ YMCAs; a circulation manager for



several NJ newspapers, a national account representative for a payroll services company, and more. She also has had many years' experience with organizing and managing food co-ops (She says she joined the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op on her first day in Addison County), and many years of experience as a teacher for both children and adults.

Mary has a passion for sustainable living, and for encouraging renewable energy solutions to our fossil fuel addictions. So, the next time you attend one of our local events, be sure to stop by and say hello to Mary.

Summary of New VT Renewable Energy Bill

Last month, the Vermont legislature passed a new renewable energy bill, H.40, a very complex and lengthy piece of legislation that will affect the state's energy sector for years to come. Here is a brief overview:

H.40 has three main goals. First, the bill encourages Vermont renewable energy development by requiring electric utilities to buy increasing amounts of electricity from renewable resources, with renewable attributes (RECs) attached. Second, H.40 will solve a "double counting" problem with the Vermont renewables market, which previously allowed a resource to be counted as renewable, even if its RECs were sold (usually out of state). Third, the legislation requires the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB) to establish new net metering rules allowing utilities to charge net metering customers for Renewable Energy Certificates they retain.

H.40 sets minimum required renewables sold by Vermont distribution utilities. Starting January 1, 2017, H.40 will require that Vermont utilities' annual retail purchases be a minimum of 55% in renewables. Thereafter, a 4% increase will be added every third year on January 1, until 2032, when 75% will be required.

New Standard Offer Program: The PSB will issue standard offer prices for energy from renewable energy plants and utilities must purchase the renewable power produced at those plants. Prices under this new program are yet to be determined. All energy purchased under this program must be sold with its RECs attached, which will be transferred to the distribution utility (There is one exception: H.40 requires PSB rule-making on net metering that allows owners to retain RECs, but reduces payments for electricity generated from the utilities in that event).

H.40 also creates modest setback requirements from public roads and adjacent property boundaries for large projects and require an affected municipality to be a party in any PSB proceeding on a large renewable project.

Overall the bill is an improvement and should encourage Vermont renewables development. However, many aspects of the bill allow new program costs to be passed through to ratepayers, making it more likely than not that rates will

increase rather than decrease as a result of the legislation (for a more detailed overview of H.40 click [here](#)).

More EV Charging Stations in the Area!

Electric vehicle sales in the U.S. continue to rise, with nearly 120,000 all-electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles sold in 2014; up 23% from 2013. Along with this increase has come an increase in public charging infrastructure, including in areas in and around Addison County.

Middlebury now has four public chargers, some with multiple cords—two at the Addison County Planning Commission, and two in Frog Hollow, including one DC fast-charger, which can fully charge most electric vehicles in less than an hour. Burlington has also seen an increase in chargers, with at least 23 charging locations, nearly all with multiple plugs. Of these, four are DC fast-chargers. One very welcome addition in Burlington are two new chargers at the parking garage at the University Mall.



Perhaps the most exciting news, however, is that Rutland has finally gotten public stations, too, with three charging locations around the city having become operational in the last year, including two DC fast-chargers. There are now

also Level-2 or DC fast-chargers in Middlesex, Montpelier, Barre, and at Ben and Jerry's in Waterbury.

These new chargers allow EV drivers in Addison County to travel much further with ease and convenience, and more chargers are being added around the state on a monthly basis. Within a year it should be possible to drive to Boston, Montreal, or New York City using fast-chargers along the interstates.

For more information about these and other charging locations, see the PlugShare website at www.plugshare.com

Heating With Pellets

I was introduced to pellet stoves about ten years ago and sat on the fence about buying one until I found a Harmon on Craigslist that I couldn't pass up. I installed the stove into an extra flue in the basement and bought two pallets (two tons) of Vermont Wood Pellets from Acorn Energy Co-op.

That first heating season was 2010, and we had a lot of snow. I had the pellets loaded into the basement so the snow wasn't a problem until I finished the second pallet. It was late February so there was a bit more to go in the season and a lot of snow covering the basement door. Getting a delivery around the back of the house in that snow was not an option.

For the rest of the season I lugged 40 lb. bags down into the basement, one by one. I know the guys at the hardware store haul two at a time, but I guess I'm just not that rugged.

In successive years, I bought three tons and things went pretty well. Compared to a wood stove, the Harmon was light on cleaning: scrape the "clinkers" out of the burn pot about once a week and after burning a ton of pellets, remove the ash pan and dump it in the compost pile. Also at the end of the season, I took apart and vacuumed the heat exchanger and the flue pipe with a hearth vacuum.

As with any wood burning appliance, you have to make sure your chimney or vent pipe is well maintained and checked by a professional.

In the end, burning pellets is a good replacement for burning oil. The wood is sourced here in New England, the price per Btu is still lower for pellets than oil, and it's easier than burning cord wood (which I still do).

Ben Lucarelli

(Note: Ben Lucarelli from New Haven is a new addition to the Acorn Energy Co-op board, replacing Richard Thodal.)

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

Celebrate Solar Tours

Saturday, June 20

At different times and locations, Celebrate Solar Tours will feature public tours of more than 40 solar systems of varying size throughout the state. Come and get an up-close understanding of the technology, economics, and benefits to the community. Visit Renewable Energy Vermont's [website](#) for more information.

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@acornenergycoop.com or call us at 802-385-1911.

Sincerely,

Greg Pahl, President
Acorn Energy Co-op