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City of Madison Launches Three Solar Programs for 2019

On Wednesday, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway launched three solar programs to help expand renewable energy across Madison. The MadiSUN programs will once again include initiatives to expand solar for residents and businesses, and this year the City will expand funding to a third program known as the “**MadiSUN Backyard Solar Grant.**”

“I am delighted that one of this year’s MadiSUN projects will be promoting sustainable energy to affordable housing opportunities as well as businesses,” said Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway. “I am glad to see this program grow. Solar energy is part of the solution as we battle climate change.”

The Backyard Solar program will award grants to non-profit organizations and affordable housing providers to assist them in installing new solar arrays. The grants are intended to serve diverse, low-income residents and neighborhoods and applications will be evaluated based on need, communities served, and organizational reach.

The City of Madison has reserved \$10,000 for grants and the Madison Common Council is exploring additional funding for the program. Backyard Solar will fund up to 20% of a winning project’s cost and organizations receiving these grants will participate in a ribbon cutting educating the neighborhood about the beneficial effects of solar power.

Jeff Burkhart, Executive Director of Literacy Network, praised the new program and the benefits of solar energy. “We are thrilled with our new solar power system and are excited to see that we’ve saved more than 9,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide from being emitted in just the first three months. Thanks to the City of Madison’s solar energy program for helping businesses and households expand solar energy use.”

The City has also approved the **MadiSUN Solar for Business** program for a second year. The program offers educational sessions, business-to-business communication, and a \$30,000 pool of rebates to incentivize Madison businesses to install solar.

The **MadiSUN Residential Group-Buy program**, which helps homeowners install solar on their own rooftops, will continue for a fourth-straight year. The program lowers the cost for homeowners and supports them through the buying process.

“We select proven solar contractors, negotiate a set price, and walk the homeowner through the entire process,” said Sam Dunaiski, Program Manager for RENEW Wisconsin, which administers the MadiSUN Programs on behalf of the City.

The Group-Buy program has helped over 100 Madison-area homes “go-solar” over the past three years, generating over \$1 million in local economic investment. Participation is expected to increase this year as the Federal Investment Tax Credit will be reduced beginning in 2020.

“2019 is the final year for the full 30% federal tax credit,” explained Dunaiski. “Homeowners and businesses are in a real sweet spot in terms of installing solar. Costs have dropped 75% in the last decade, and there are still great incentives available. 2019 is another great year to go solar in Madison.”

Five community education sessions have been scheduled which are free for the public to attend and learn more:

- Thursday, May 30 at the Sequoya Public Library, 6:00PM
- Thursday, June 6 at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, 6:00PM
- Tuesday, June 25 at the Monona Public Library, 6:00PM
- Wednesday, June 26 at the Goodman Community Center, 6:00PM
- Tuesday, July 16 at Rosie’s Café and Bakery, 5:30PM

New for 2019, RENEW Wisconsin will also hold four kid-friendly solar information sessions. The sessions are geared towards children aged 5-10 years old and their parents or guardians. They are also free and open to the public:

- Wednesday, June 5 at Lakeview Public Library, 4:00PM
- Wednesday, June 12 at Central Public Library, 4:00PM
- Thursday, June 13 at Alicia Ashman Library, 4:00PM
- Saturday, June 29 at Alicia Ashman Library, 10:00AM

More information sessions are being confirmed, and meetings for businesses to learn from other businesses which have already installed solar are also being finalized. The program’s website, www.madisunsolar.com, will be updated as additional events and more program information is confirmed.

About MadiSUN and RENEW Wisconsin

MadiSUN facilitates and assists in the installation of solar power for residents and businesses located within the City of Madison. ***RENEW Wisconsin*** is a nonprofit organization which promotes solar power, wind power, biogas, local hydropower, geothermal energy, and electric vehicles in Wisconsin. RENEW Wisconsin is contracted by the City of Madison to implement the MadiSUN programs. More information can be found at www.madisunsolar.com and www.renewwisconsin.org.