



COLORADO
Energy Office



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Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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Colorado Energy Office, GRID Alternatives Announce Holy Cross Energy Community Solar Project

Holy Cross Energy service territory to benefit from growing low-income solar access program

DENVER – August 9, 2016 – The Colorado Energy Office (CEO), GRID Alternatives (GRID) and Holy Cross Energy (HCE) announce the development of a community solar array that will lower the electric bills of qualified low-income residents in the HCE service territory. The project is part of a statewide initiative designed to demonstrate how the community solar model can be optimized to reduce energy costs for utilities' highest need customers—those who spend more than 4 percent of income on utility bills.

“A primary goal of this initiative is to comprehensively address the energy burden upon low-income households by linking low-cost renewable energy with the energy savings provided through our Weatherization Assistance Program. We commend Holy Cross Energy and GRID Alternatives for demonstrating the scalability and viability of low-income household access to renewable energy,” said Colorado Energy Office Director Jeff Ackermann.

GRID received a \$1.2 million CEO grant in August 2015 to partner with utilities to implement low-income community solar. Earlier this year, CEO and GRID announced project partners, each of which is piloting a slight variation on the low-income community solar model to address the unique needs of rural utility service areas and their customers. The projects selected are both affordable and scalable for utility partners, and offer great potential to expand across the state.

“Holy Cross Energy has a reputation as a community solar leader in Colorado—they were the first utility in the state to embrace and develop a community solar project. It’s exciting to bring HCE’s innovation and GRID’s innovation together for a project that will help families in HCE’s service territory,” noted GRID Executive Director Chuck Watkins.

Holy Cross Energy Chief Executive Officer Del Worley said HCE is interested in expanding renewable energy access with this impactful and innovative model. “This project is a win-win, it helps Holy Cross members who are having a hard time making ends meet and adds more renewable energy to our power supply mix.”

On August 11 in Gypsum, GRID’s programmatic barn-raising model will engage members of the community to come together to install the 145 kilowatt solar array. Participants include employees from the utility, the subscribers benefitting, local elected officials, schools and others to install 546 solar panels that will help save up to 35-45 local qualified families approximately \$500 per year.

GRID's team is excited to be working with local partners on this project. The Community Office for Resource Efficiency (CORE) has long been a supporter and outreach partner with GRID in the mountain region and continues to be a strong advocate as this program develops. GRID is also partnering with Colorado Mountain College and Walking Mountains Science Center to offer practical hands-on solar job training and experience for local youth.

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About Colorado Energy Office

The Colorado Energy Office works to improve the effective use of all of Colorado's energy resources and the efficient consumption of energy in all economic sectors by providing technical guidance, financial support, policy advocacy and public communications. Go to www.colorado.gov/energy to learn more.

About GRID Alternatives

GRID Alternatives is America's largest nonprofit solar installer bringing clean energy technology and job training to low-income families and underserved communities through a network of community partners, volunteers, and philanthropic supporters. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org.

About Holy Cross Energy

Holy Cross Energy, formed in 1939, is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative utility providing electricity, energy products and services to more than 55,000 consumers in the Western Colorado counties of Eagle, Pitkin, Garfield, Mesa and Gunnison. See www.holycross.com for more details.