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Solarize Chicagoland program surpasses summer goals, will install 135 solar arrays

Kane County, IL –The Solarize Chicagoland program surpassed its goals this summer, achieving commitments to install nearly 1,000 kilowatts (kW) of solar on 135 properties in the Chicago-area, including 14 in Kane County. The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) and Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) launched this solar group buy program in April, and the program’s participation deadline was September 30.

In their first year of operation, Solarize Chicagoland’s newly-installed solar arrays will offset emissions equivalent to approximately 800,000 pounds of coal burned. Collectively, customers will also save an estimated \$98,300 in electric bills in the first year alone.

Ken and Patricia Groenewold were among the first to have a new solar energy system installed by GRNE Solar as part of the Solarize Chicagoland program. Their system is composed of 28 310-Watt solar panels, totaling 8.68 kilowatts (KWdc) of solar power.

“I really wanted to wait for this program, and I’m glad that I did,” Ken, who attended the first Solarize Chicagoland presentation back in April, said. “I am not looking at 30 years, my savings will be about \$1,500 a year, so after incentives, the solar panels will pay for itself in about 4 years.”

Solarize Chicagoland used the power of volume purchasing to make solar more accessible and affordable for home, business and farm owners in Cook, DuPage, Kane and Will Counties.

“At CUB, we are very excited about Illinois Shines, the new Illinois solar incentive that has become available this year, but we know that with all the new buzz around solar, it can be confusing to figure out what’s best for you,” said Christina Uzzo, CUB Environmental Outreach Coordinator.

Navigating the solar market can be intimidating, creating barriers for solar adoption. To help break down those barriers, the program directly educated 1,195 residents about solar through 65 free, public, one-hour informational sessions called Solar Power Hours.

“The presentations provided folks with the information they needed to determine whether solar is right for them,” said Peter Murphy, Solar Program Director for the MREA. “Partnering with CUB was instrumental to the program’s success because they were able to turn out a huge number of people to the presentations.”

“We hope that these 135 new solar arrays can serve as landmarks to the affordability, feasibility, and overall common sense of adopting solar quickly here in Illinois,” Uzzo said.

CUB represents the interests of residential and small-business utility customers and has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes, secure refunds and fight for clean, low-cost energy. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline, 1-800-669-5556, or visit www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.

The MREA was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit shortly after the first [Energy Fair](#) in 1990. MREA’s mission is to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715-592-6595 or visit www.midwestrenew.org.

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