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State expands Solarize RI to reach more homeowners and businesses

Charlestown, Cranston launch community campaigns

Charlestown, R.I., – Representatives from the Office of Energy Resources (OER), the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and the non-profit organization SmartPower joined with municipal leaders today to announce the communities that will participate in the Spring 2017 Solarize Rhode Island program. Charlestown and Cranston were selected through a request for application process and residents in both municipalities can sign up to participate in the program starting immediately.

“In March, I announced an ambitious goal for our State to secure 1,000 megawatts of clean energy resources and double the number of clean energy jobs by 2020,” said Governor Gina Raimondo. “With its spring round, Solarize RI provides the residents of Cranston and Charlestown an opportunity to contribute toward this goal by adopting solar, while realizing long-term savings on their energy bills. It’s a win for both homeowners and the environment.”

Solarize Rhode Island is a community-based outreach campaign that seeks to increase the adoption of small-scale solar electricity in participating communities through a competitive tiered pricing structure that increases the savings for everyone as more home and business owners sign contracts. Now in its third year, Solarize Rhode Island, a partnership between the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), the Commerce Corporation, and the non-profit marketing firm SmartPower, has led to more than 475 residents and business owners in 13 municipalities signing contracts for small-scale solar electricity systems. In addition to Rhode Island residents and businesses signing up for solar, the campaign educates hundreds and even thousands more Rhode Islanders about the economic and environmental benefits of solar electricity, energy efficiency and other clean energy technologies.

“Solarize RI is a valuable educational tool, helping residents and business owners who have been considering solar, get the most up-to-date information from qualified, vetted experts,” said State Energy Commissioner Carol Grant. “The technology has improved greatly over the past few years and Rhode Island has implemented new programs and policies to help homeowners go solar. If you have been evaluating when might be the right time to make the switch to clean energy, it’s time to take another look.”

“Reducing energy costs and saving energy are invaluable tools for every household and every business here in Rhode Island,” said Rhode Island Commerce Corporation President and Chief Operating Officer Darin Early. “And Solarize Rhode Island has proven time and time again to be a key ingredient to helping residents

and businesses manage their energy costs. And at the same time, we help the green and technology sectors of our local economy.”

“Once again, the Ocean State continues to lead the way in solar,” said Brian F. Keane, President of SmartPower. “And today, perhaps more than ever, we need solar leadership from the states to demonstrate our commitment to a strong economy and a healthy environment. Rhode Island, Governor Raimondo and each and every Rhode Island resident who goes solar is clearly rising to this challenge and showing what solar leadership looks like here in New England – and across the nation. Let’s Solarize!”

“The City of Cranston is excited to have been chosen as a participant in this year’s Solarize Rhode Island program,” said Cranston Principal Planner Jason M. Pezzullo. “The City is highly committed to the adoption of renewable energy systems that reduce our overall reliance on fossil-fuels. Partnering with our provider, RGS Energy, we hope to promote greater adoption of rooftop solar installations for both residents and businesses to help reduce their overall utility costs.”

"We are so happy to have the opportunity to bring the Solarize program to Charlestown," said Julie Carroccia, Town Council Vice President. "Homeowners and small businesses are looking to do their part to minimize their carbon footprint while reducing costs. We have been getting very positive feedback on the Solarize initiative, as the community has learned that we have been selected for the Solarize program."

The first two highly successful phases of Solarize RI included North Smithfield, Tiverton and Little Compton, which sparked a growing interest in the solar market. To date, Solarize Rhode Island has been responsible for PV installations totaling 3371.22kW. Charlestown and Cranston are the 14th and 15th municipalities to offer the Solarize program to its residents and the state expects to offer a fall round later this year.

About Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) is the lead state agency on energy policy and programs. OER’s mission is to lead Rhode Island to a secure, cost-effective, and sustainable energy future. OER works closely with private and public stakeholders to increase the reliability and security of our energy supply, reduce energy costs and mitigate price volatility, and improve environmental quality. www.energy.ri.gov.

About Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation is the official economic development organization for the state of Rhode Island. The Commerce Corporation’s mission is to work with public, private and non-profit partners to create the conditions for businesses in all sectors to thrive and to improve the quality of life for our citizens by promoting the state’s long-term economic health and prosperity. The corporation manages the state’s Renewable Energy Fund, which provides grants and loans for renewable energy projects with the potential to make electricity in a cleaner, more sustainable manner, while stimulating job growth in the green technology and energy sectors of Rhode Island’s economy. www.commercerci.com

About SmartPower

SmartPower is the nation’s leading non-profit social marketing firm dedicated to promoting clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Named the “Best Non-profit Marketing Firm in the US”,

SmartPower's mission is to help Americans make smart energy choices by creating on-the-ground campaigns that engage the public and generate measurable energy actions. www.smartpower.org

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