

Ellensburg Community Renewable Park

To help meet the future energy needs of our customers, the City wants to take advantage of one of Ellensburg's most abundant energy resources, the sun (over 300 days of sunshine a year). A pilot community solar electric project is providing everyone in Ellensburg the opportunity to invest in locally produced clean electricity. Solar electric modules (panels) are converting free renewable sunshine directly into electrical power ready to be used in homes and businesses. With no moving parts, no noise and no pollution, solar electric modules are the simplest and cleanest power generation systems our community has available.

The first phase of the project - 120 solar modules (36KW) was completed in November 06 and is located on the west edge of West Ellensburg Park, adjacent to Interstate 90. All of the power being produced goes directly onto the City's utility power lines. A \$120,000 grant received by CWU in 2008 provided the funding to complete Phase II (72 additional modules). Phase III - 180 thin-film solar modules from First Solar was installed in December. Ellensburg recently received a Federal ARRA grant to continue expanding the project with both state-of-the-art solar and small wind systems. The installation of additional thin film modules is scheduled for later this summer.

This project uses an innovative financing approach that makes it unique among the various renewable energy programs in the Northwest. *People in our community are being asked to partner with the City to help fund the project. In exchange for their financial support, the City will give the contributors a dollar credit on their electric bill for the value of the electricity produced by the solar system.* Example: If a customer's contribution represents 3% of the total funds contributed by utility customers, that customer would receive 3% of the power produced by the solar project - deducted directly off their electric bill.

Contributions made by utility customers go primarily towards the purchase of the solar modules. The City's Conservation and Renewable program is funding the other project costs that include the inverters, racking systems, property/site and the electrical connection to the grid. As community funds continue coming in over the next three years - the Utility will continue to expand the system. A Fat Spaniels data monitoring system is also installed to disseminate the project's data via the internet. Check out the following web site to track system output: <http://view2.fatspaniel.net/Ellensburg/project/EndUserView.html>.

WA Legislation SB6170 was passed recently providing a \$0.30/kWh solar production incentive to contributors of Community Solar projects. The final rules from the State Department of Revenue will be out sometime this month. The total annual solar production incentive to Ellensburg contributors will be \$25,000/yr, for each of the next ten years.

Contributions from local residents and businesses are now being accepted to help fund Phase IV. The City is considering some different solar technologies for 2010-11. Their performance will be tracked with the existing 300 watt RWE Schott polycrystalline modules. To acquire additional information or a Contribution Agreement, please contact: **Gary Nystedt, Resource Manager for the City of Ellensburg at (509) 962-7245.**

