

SSTI Quarterly Newsletter

Maximizing Solar Potential across the Southwest

Q4 2012

Progress on Achieving Goals

Nine months into the program, cities and counties participating in the SSTI are making swift progress toward reaching their program targets. The chart below shows a summary of this progress across all (40) participating jurisdictions.

The green markers indicate levels aspired to by communities wishing to become more solar friendly based on Department of Energy targets. Including goals that are in progress, we are more than 85% of the way toward reaching these cumulative targets with about 2 months to go in the project.



Key goals within the permitting category center on improving and streamlining the permitting and inspection of PV systems in the local jurisdiction. This includes the use of a standardized form, allowing for electronic download and email submittal of the form, and having reasonable turnaround times and fees. The main aim of the planning and zoning category is to ensure that solar PV systems are permitted on all structures, and that zoning regulations aren't overly restrictive.

What's Happening This Quarter

The SSTI team is hosting **regional seminars** in select local areas. These meetings are a chance to spread the word on SSTI progress to the wider community and to forge ahead with progress on collaborative regional goals. Current schedule:

Bear River Valley, UT – Nov 28th
 San Joaquin Valley, CA – Dec 12th
 SW Colorado – Coming in January
 CO Front Range – Coming in January

Presentations will be available on the News page at solarroadmap.com

Recognition Opportunity for Solar Roadmap Communities



The Solar Roadmap now features a recognition program for participating communities. The designation as a "Solar Roadmap Star Community" will be applied for those communities able to reach a target in any of their roadmap categories. This label will appear on the roadmap page.

If the goal is reached in all four categories, the community is awarded a "5 Star Community" badge. This badge signifies a community that is on the leading edge of solar market development and process improvement.



In addition to this public recognition, the SSTI team will also be creating case studies for those communities able to reach their program targets. These case studies will be used to inspire and guide future participants of solarroadmap.com and other solar soft cost initiatives. As an opportunity normally only available to larger communities, this will be an excellent chance for the smaller and more rural communities to showcase their efforts.

SSTI participants who have already been designated a Star Community include:

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|---|--------------------------|
|  | |
| Adams County, CO (Z) | Fresno, CA (F) |
| Carbondale, CO (Z) | Gardnerville, NV (F) |
| Clovis, CA (F) | Garfield County, CO (Z) |
| Cortez, CA (Z) | Gunnison, CO (Z) |
| Crested Butte, CO (Z) | Hanford, CA (P) |
| Delano, CA (P) | Inyo County, CA (P) |
| Livingston, CA (P) | Mt Crested Butte, CO (Z) |
| Merced, CA (P) | Pahrump, NV (Z) |
| Turlock, CA (Z) | |
|  | |
| Esmeralda Cty, NV (Z,M) | Modesto, CA (P,Z) |
| Madera, CA (P,Z) | Visalia, CA (P,Z) |
| P = permitting, Z = planning & zoning, F = finance, M = market development | |

SSTI Goal Highlight: Standardized Solar Permitting Forms

One of the most impactful goals of the SSTI is the adoption of standardized permitting forms for solar PV systems. The use of standardized forms enables more effective review by code officials who may not have detailed knowledge of building code regulations for solar PV. The clearly defined requirements also make the application process easier and more transparent for installers, saving significant time and cost.

The standardized form takes the majority of information needed for review and conveys it via fill-in-the-blank forms. The most widely used templates were developed by SolarABCs, a collaborative effort funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that dedicates experts to transforming solar markets by improving building codes, utility interconnection procedures, and product standards, reliability, and safety.

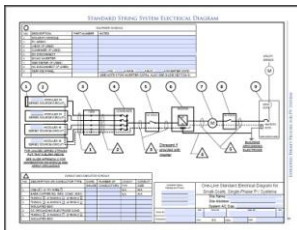
The SSTI team has taken these templates and consolidated them into a single, easy to use document. A Colorado specific version has also been developed for those jurisdictions in CO that handle only structural review (electrical review is handled through a state agency). Several SSTI jurisdictions are looking to adopt this template for use in their area.



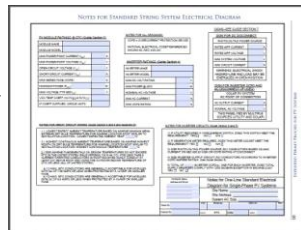
Cover Page



Structural Review



Electrical Review p.1



Electrical Review p.2

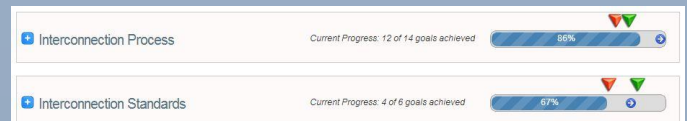
SSTI Case Study: La Plata Electric Association

As an active participant in the SSTI program, La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) is demonstrating their desire to support renewables and encourage the use of solar PV by their customers. LPEA is a cooperative utility serving over 40,000 meters in Southwest Colorado.



LPEA and SSTI team meet in Durango to discuss their solar roadmap

The interconnection process for solar customers is streamlined and efficient, as indicated by the high score in this key roadmap category (pictured below). LPEA's [dedicated interconnection webpage](#) hosts information on policies and procedures, all necessary forms, and provides for electronic submittal of the application. There is currently no fee assessed for the application process.



Through their participation in the SSTI, LPEA has been able to improve their market leading positioning on distributed generation. This includes identifying criteria to allow simple, qualifying systems to be eligible for fast tracked interconnection procedures. LPEA has also been able to add further content to their website.

LPEA has also been involved in community outreach, including funding PV systems for local middle schools.

Atwater Solar Facility Unveiled

The City of Atwater has turned on a 1.1 megawatt solar project at the new wastewater treatment plant. The system is projected to save \$1.5 million in operating costs over the next 20 years, including a \$5,000 monthly reduction in energy bills.

The system is owned, operated, and maintained by Siemens. The City buys the clean power produced by the array under a power purchase agreement.

The solar energy experts at Optony were employed to represent the City's interest in the project and to ensure it ran smoothly from procurement through construction.



As a participant in the SSTI program, Atwater is working on solar process streamlining that will make such installations even more cost effective in the future.

[Learn more about this exciting project here.](#)

Hanford Solar Facility Unveiled

The City of Hanford also recently completed a 1MW solar installation at their wastewater treatment plant. The single-axis tracking system is expected to save more than \$7 million over the lifetime of the project.

This clean energy project is expected to cut electric bills by almost 50% while providing a carbon emission offset roughly equivalent to removing 200 cars from the road each year.

The project was developed by Chevron Energy Solutions with collaboration from Bank of America and support from Southern California Edison's PV rebate program.



Photo from www.pv-tech.org

As an SSTI city, Hanford is supplementing these solar installations with work to further improve and streamline their permitting process for PV systems.

[Learn more about this exciting project here.](#)

About Optony

Optony is a global research and consulting firm focused on enabling governments, schools, investors, and commercial organizations to bridge the gap between solar energy goals and real-world results. Leveraging our independence, domain expertise and unique market position, our clients are empowered to make informed decisions that reduce risk, optimize operations, and deliver the greatest long-term return on their solar investments.

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About SEI

Strategic Energy Innovations (SEI), a nonprofit organization established in 1997, helps empower schools and universities, small businesses, local governments, affordable housing agencies, and agricultural communities to reduce pollution and save money through energy and resource efficiency.

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