

SSTI Newsletter

Maximizing Solar Potential across the Southwest

Q1 2013

SSTI Celebrates First Year Milestone

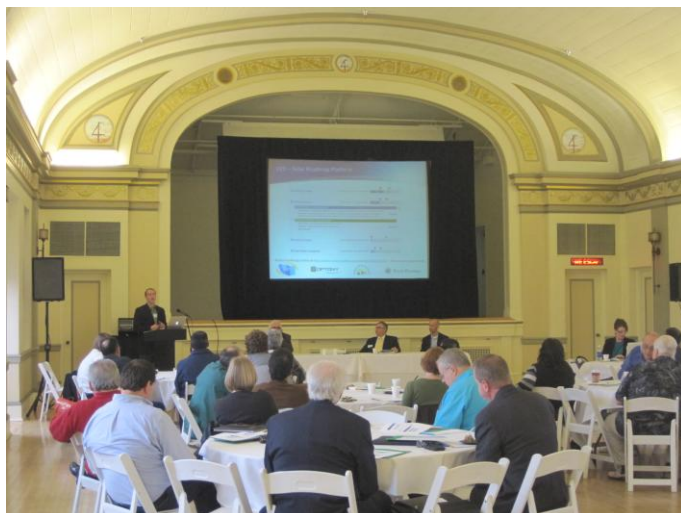
Over the last year, communities across the Southwest have been positioning themselves to take advantage of the burgeoning solar industry. The Southwest Solar Transformation Initiative (SSTI) has been helping these communities to identify opportunities to become solar ready, and assisting them in taking action to make this happen.

As the SSTI program celebrates its first year, many communities have made great strides. This includes new streamlined permit application forms that are available online, new solar friendly zoning ordinances, expanded information access, and the development of innovative market based activities (see the “Solarize” article on page 2) to grow their regional solar markets.

Many communities were able to increase their Solar Market Maturity assessment score (developed by the U.S. Department of Energy) by more than 200 points on a 1000 point scale. As of the official end date of February 14th 2013, the City of Merced, CA was leading the way with a total score of 807.

The Solar Roadmap platform has served as the interface for these communities, the place where their customized goals are catalogued and targeted resources are made available. The Roadmap platform will continue to be available to these communities after the conclusion of the SSTI, and is now available to other communities as well.

Learn more about the participants [here](#).



SSTI Regional Meeting in Fresno, CA

Solar Leaderboard Shines Brightly

We’re celebrating the progress made by Southwest Solar Transformation Initiative (SSTI) municipal partners by announcing the launch of the [Solar Roadmap Leaderboard](#). The Leaderboard offers a single, dynamic view of SSTI communities’ progress toward U.S. Department of Energy targets to transform the solar market. It also serves as a reference to benchmark cities and counties across the Southwest based on the key Rooftop Solar Challenges focus areas of permitting, zoning & planning, financing and market development. By using the Leaderboard, you can quickly scan for and access the roadmaps and profiles of over 40 solar progressive municipalities across the Southwest. Sortable by progress level, name, state, population and community type, the site celebrates and spotlights SSTI jurisdictions and the steps they’ve taken to strengthen their economy and environment through clean, locally produced power and by making it easier and more cost-effective for their residents to “go-solar”.

Progress	Name	State	Population	Type	Recognized Achievements
79%	City & County of San Francisco	CA	805,235	County	
CLICK HERE TO VIEW LEADERBOARD					
7%	County of Fresno	CA	452,854	County	
1%	Inyo County	CA	18,548	County	
6%	City of Modesto	CA	201,165	City	
6%	City of Visalia	CA	124,442	City	

Leaderboard municipal partners’ progress is updated real-time as jurisdictions achieve their goals. A community receives a green circle and letter below their progress bar once it meets or exceeds the Department of Energy targets in each focus area. Other solar-related achievements are graphically called out with links to learn more about those efforts. The Solar Roadmap Leaderboard serves as a highly visible platform for municipalities to showcase their efforts and compare their progress with peer cities and counties as they continue on the path towards becoming a true solar-friendly community. Be sure to visit the Leaderboard this week and see how your community scores along the solar spectrum!

“Solarize” Programs Taking Off

For a lot of folks, the idea of going solar can be intimidating. Learning how it works, soliciting bids, and finding the best deal can be challenging. Many SSTI communities are helping to alleviate these logistical and financial concerns by participating in solarize programs.

Collaborative procurement or solarize campaigns are group buy programs that bring multiple customers together, leveraging their purchasing power to make going solar easier and more cost effective. The customers can be homeowners, businesses, municipal agencies, or a combination thereof. The collaborative procurement model has taken off nationally, as solar adopters are motivated by the chance to go solar at a reduced price and with support from a network of like-minded buyers.

The SSTI team had the opportunity to introduce this concept to participants during the last year, and several campaigns have been kick-started as a result. Current efforts include:

- Durango & SW Colorado (for homeowners)
- Pueblo County & SE Colorado (for municipal agencies)
- Modesto & Stanislaus County, CA (for business)
- Fresno & surrounding areas, CA (for municipal agencies)
- Kings/Kern/Tulare County, CA (for homeowners)

These efforts are hoping to make solar available to new customers in these regions, for whom solar may not have been an option previously. All programs are still taking new participants; if you live in one of these areas and would like to join in or learn more, [contact us here!](#)

Solar Permitting in Atwater, CA

The City of Atwater recently unveiled a new solar permitting form, making it available for download from the City’s Building Department webpage.

The form can be found here:

<http://www.atwater.org/index.cfm?page=449110>

This form follows the best practices set forth by the Solar America Board for Codes and Standards, and allows qualifying residential PV systems to apply for permit via a standardized fill-in-the-blank form. There are different versions of the form for both string inverters and micro-inverters.

Atwater is one of the first communities to adopt this best practice, demonstrating their leadership in becoming a solar friendly community.



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.

www.optony.com

Contact: Thomas Yurysta, Senior Project Manager, thomas.yurysta@optony.com



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.

www.seiinc.org

Contact: Stephen Miller, Deputy Director, stephen@seiinc.org

