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City of Santa Rosa

## **Santa Rosa wins Solar America Cities grant Solar Sonoma County project team to meet with DOE**

**Santa Rosa, Calif.** – Representatives of Santa Rosa’s Solar Sonoma County project will meet with U.S. Department of Energy officials and staff in Tucson, Arizona, April 14-16, to begin work on a countywide solar program to increase and accelerate local solar energy production. Santa Rosa was recently named one of 12 new “Solar America Cities,” which includes federal funding and technical assistance for project implementation, for its Solar Sonoma County grant proposal. The Department of Energy is hosting the meeting in Tucson for “Solar America Cities” named this year and last year, a total of 25 cities nationwide committed to solar technology adoption at the local level.

Project team members traveling to Tucson include Dell Tredinnick and Tasha Wright of the City of Santa Rosa Utilities Department; Marty Roberts, Lori Houston, and Michael Kyse representing Solar Sonoma County and Solar Sebastopol; and Debora Fudge, Mayor of Windsor and member of the SSC Steering Committee. During the three-day conference, the project team will meet with a DOE project officer and technical advisors from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) to determine technical assistance needed and create a resource team for the Solar Sonoma County project.

The City of Santa Rosa’s winning proposal is to expand the highly successful Solar Sebastopol program to a countywide effort in partnership with other local cities and the County of Sonoma. The City of Santa Rosa will administer the grant, with details still to be finalized. The funds will assist Santa Rosa’s and its Solar Sonoma County partners’ efforts to increase the amount of solar installations in the County by 25 megawatts over the next three years. Ultimately Solar Sonoma County will become a public-private consortium of local governments, solar companies, businesses, and other groups and organizations.

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Solar Sonoma County plans to develop ways to increase local solar energy production, such as:

- Reducing or removing financial barriers for municipalities, businesses, and homeowners
- Creating additional solar and energy efficiency incentives
- Streamlining existing and recommending new local solar policies
- Engaging and educating the public about energy efficiency and solar energy through local events and centralized resources
- Identifying additional projects for achieving initial and future solar energy production goals
- Encouraging local municipalities to install solar on their buildings and properties.

Last fall, a group of interested representatives from county and city governments, solar companies, PG&E, and other local business interests began meeting together to explore the possibility of expanding Solar Sebastopol throughout the county.

“It is very exciting to see the level of interest and enthusiasm from local governments and many other organizations and individuals for this program. This grant award will only increase our momentum,” said Marty Roberts, founding member of Solar Sebastopol.

In January, the City of Sebastopol, on behalf of Solar Sonoma County, won a \$75,000 grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to expand Solar Sebastopol countywide toward assisting local government in achieving their targeted greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2015. The ad hoc Solar Sonoma County group set an initial target of 25 additional megawatts of solar energy in three years to meet roughly 10 percent of countywide electricity demand through solar energy, offsetting an estimated 8,500 tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

Initial partners in the Solar America Cities grant project include the cities of Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Petaluma, Windsor, Sonoma, Cotati, Cloverdale, Rohnert Park, and Healdsburg, the County of Sonoma, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 551. Grant funds will enable Solar Sonoma County to add technical writers and researchers to expand the base of knowledge about potential programs to support solar.

Solar Sonoma County’s interim Working Group consists of representatives of all the local governments and organizations with an interest in promoting solar. The grant application includes in-kind support from Santa Rosa in the form of planned and new municipal solar projects as well as staff time and resources for Solar Sonoma County meetings and projects. IBEW in-kind grant support includes free training workshops for solar installers as part of this program.

The City of Sebastopol’s \$75,000 grant award from the BAAQMD earlier this year also represents in-kind support.

For more information about the DOE “Solar America Cities” awards and program see:

<http://www.doe.gov/news/6099.htm>

[http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/solar\\_america/pdfs/solar\\_america\\_cities\\_prospectus.pdf](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/solar_america/pdfs/solar_america_cities_prospectus.pdf)

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