

## **Marketing and Outreach Plan**

Outline a marketing plan that describes methods to create community awareness around the Solarize Mass program. Describe ways in which a joint marketing strategy between the Municipality, the volunteer team, and the selected Installer could increase the number of sign-ups for a solar site assessment and expand solar PV adoption within the community. Provide a plan for implementation, including methods to engage additional community members and volunteers. This could include an outreach activity timeline, expected volunteer activity hours, preliminary goals for community participation and solar PV adoption during the program. Include information on where community events could be held, including the Meet the Installer community meeting.

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The following marketing and outreach plan is designed to achieve a successful Solarize program within 12 months - a more compressed timeline than past programs. Due to the expiration of the federal 30% tax credit for solar pv systems on December 31, 2016, all solar systems purchased through the SCC Collaborative must be installed and interconnected by that date to qualify for the credit. Therefore, our timeline budgets three months for startup, RFP development and installer selection, 2.5 months for a marketing campaign and site assessments, three months for installation and three months to complete utility interconnections. Due to this accelerated timeline, we are beginning the marketing outreach unofficially starting in mid-October and will carry that outreach effort through June, with our solar coaches providing free preliminary site assessments to accelerate the pre-qualification process and get more people to the contracting stage as early in the year as possible. While challenging, we believe that by leveraging the expertise and resources within and between the three communities, we can work with the installer to use the urgency of the expiring tax credit to increase site assessment sign ups during a 3-month marketing window.

The Team Description section above lists the members of each town Solarize Team,

the Municipal leadership group and the lists of municipal groups and commissions supporting the project as well as other community and regional organizations that the Solarize project is already working with or will reach out to in 2016. Attachments show some of the initial collaborations already undertaken.

### **Outreach & Marketing Plan**

Due to the compressed timeline of this project, outreach regarding the Solarize program has already begun, beginning with a preliminary public meeting to introduce the Solarize program in Shelburne held on October 22, 2015, which drew 27 participants and launched this collaborative project. Colrain held a public meeting on November 23 at which 32 residents came to hear a presentation by the State's representative Jim Barry of the CEC and information presented by John Walsh of Shelburne. In addition 11 more contacts have been added by the selectboard chair simply by posting on Facebook and word of mouth. Conway will hold a public solar information meeting within a month of hearing CEC acceptance of this application. Common outreach methods to be used by all towns have already begun and will include:

- Town-wide robo-calls announcing Solarize meetings
- Public meetings to recruit volunteers, gather stakeholders and increase public awareness of Solarize
- Use of Community Group newsletters and announcements/presentations at Community Group meetings to publicize Solarize (see list in Team Description)
- On-line Surveys to assess interest, support and gather contact information
- Tabling at community events, farmers markets and festivals
- Leafletting at Transfer Stations to gather email contacts for free site assessments
- Door to door conversations, flyers and door hangers to publicize Solarize
- Outreach to schools and use of school take-home newsletters for announcements
- News releases, articles, letters and columns in local papers and community calendars – West County News, Recorder others
- Publicity on local radio and local cable (“Over the Falls”) talk shows and community calendars
- Coordination with Assessors, Fire/Water Districts & Sewer Commissions to include Solarize mailers with tax bill mailings, or direct mail of printed flyers.

Once the project is officially accepted as a MassCEC Solarize program, the following outreach methods can begin in January and will include:

- Town web site home pages for Solarize project, email sign up and Coach and Installer contacts
- SCC Solarize social media branding the three towns and MassCEC Solarize on Facebook, Mail Chimp, Meetup and other social media tools.
- Direct mail outreach to households in the three-town area
- Email updates to our growing list of contacts interested in site assessments.

Preliminary free site assessments are beginning already in Shelburne by Solar Coach, John Walsh, who possesses the equipment and expertise to conduct site assessments. Colrain and Conway solar coaches may replicate this approach. Otherwise, official site assessments conducted by the solar installer will begin as soon as the Installer is selected and ready to start in March/April. Ongoing outreach efforts will continue but will now include Installer logos and info as well as Mass CEC Solarize logo and info and will be focused on the upcoming 3-month marketing window. Specific outreach activities (in addition to those listed above) that will take place in specific towns during the March 15 – June 30, 2016 marketing and site assessment period with the Installer will include:

- April: GSFABA Business Breakfast – flyers and sign-up sheets for free site assessments
- Late April: Direct mail outreach and media announcements inviting residents to **Meet the Installer** events in all participating towns
- Early May: Town Meeting flyers, announcements and sign-up sheets for free site assessments
- Late May: Demonstration tours of homes with rooftop and ground mounted solar systems.
- June 11: Shelburne Falls Riverfest – Solarize tabling
- Mid/Late June: Final **Meet the Installer** event in each town and publicity about final deadline for solar pv contracts

**Three-Town Solarize Program Marketing Goal:** Our conservative goal for this program is to contract for 100 – 150 kw of installed solar by June 30, 2016. Given our compressed three month installation timeline, we anticipate that the upper limit of installed solar we will have time to contract for by our September 30, 2016 completion deadline may realistically be no more than 250kw. Although our maximum installed solar may turn out to be limited more by time than demand, we will work with our installer to have as much installation capacity available as scheduling allows, and advise interested residents accordingly. Some may wish to pursue installation independently, given time constraints.