



*The Power to Make a Difference!*  
 Newsletter  
 First Quarter  
 March 2016



### Spring Greetings!

Thank you for your continued support of RREAL and REAL Solar and the good work we do. 2016 is going to be an outstanding year for our efforts! Thanks for being a part of it. Please share this newsletter with your friends, family, and colleagues who share your interest in a clean energy future. We look forward to hearing from you.

## Solar Assistance: Fighting Energy Poverty with Solar Power! Power to the People!

### Community Solar for Community Action!



RREAL continues to focus on the introduction of solar energy into the federal energy assistance program as a clean, long-term solution to low-income energy poverty. We are pleased to announce the first 100% low-income community solar array in the State of Minnesota in partnership with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. The 200 kW array will be built this summer and integrated into the Leech Lake Energy Assistance program.

Community Solar for Community Action represents a new model of low-income energy assistance that is nationally relevant. As the conversation about low-income solar grows and becomes national in scope, RREAL is proud to remind our community that the community action agency network serves 96% of the counties in the United States and is the logical vehicle for scaling low-income solar programs.

On an individual level, low-income households spend on average 15% - 20% of their income on energy-related expenses. This puts a strain on already tight budgets and makes families significantly more susceptible to rising rates of electricity. Helping households save money on energy directly translates into a family's ability to cover their other basic needs, including food, housing costs, education, transportation, child care and medical expenses.

On a macro level, renewable energy provides broad community benefits, including local jobs, economic growth, private investment, utilization of local renewable resources for energy production, and lower rates of pollution. In short, solar provides significant benefits to low-income people who need it most.

### RREAL and REAL Solar continue to Grow and Welcome New Team Members

**New Electrician** Joins REAL Solar!



As demand grows for REAL Solar's solar electric design-build services, we are pleased to welcome **Craig Schmidt** to the team and add depth to our roster of electricians.

Craig will be working with solar veteran Joel Lindstrom to expand our solar electric installation capacity.

Thanks for your support, **Initiative Foundation!** RREAL was awarded 2 VISTA Summer Associates for June and July, and **one full-year VISTA** who will start later this summer! Interested in applying, or know anyone who might be? Please check out details on our [website](#) and apply through the My AmeriCorps website.

### Saga Solar Partnership

Having deployed over 425 single-family residential solar energy systems, RREAL envisions making significantly greater impact through the Community Shared Solar model. Centrally-located solar electric arrays, commonly called community solar or shared solar, promise to remove many of the obstacles to ownership in renewable generation, such as lack of a suitable site due to shading or other issues, or being a renter. Community Shared Solar offers the potential for more people to participate in the renewable economy.

### Solar Assistance Installation through Dept. of Commerce Funding

In early February, RREAL installed a solar air heating system for another low-income family near Cloquet, MN. This brings us to over 430 installations of solar energy systems for low-income families! This project leveraged the State's Renewable Energy Equipment Grant Program (REEGP) which still has funds to serve more families. Apply through your community action agency today.



We are excited to partner with the newest MN PV manufacturer, Saga Solar! Based in St. Paul, **Saga Solar** is a Public Benefit Corporation and will be donating modules for **Solar Assistance** installations. Saga is raising funds to help retrofit their manufacturing line in order to hire disabled workers. Please spread the word about their **good work**, and check out their Indiegogo campaign [here](#).

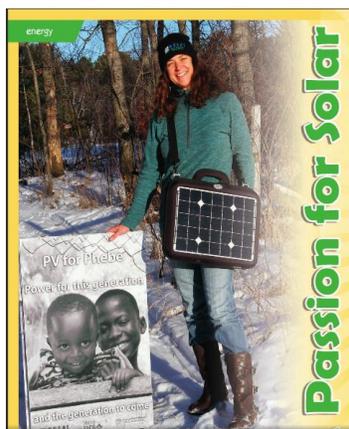
### Related Product Sales

### Skip the Grid: PV for Phebe

The Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL), in partnership with the ELCA, has received **Wheat Ridge Ministries' support** in developing a program to **deploy solar energy to power developing countries' health care systems**. A reliable electricity supply is a prerequisite for high quality health care delivery, yet many hospitals around the world rely exclusively on expensive diesel fuel or have no electricity whatsoever. RREAL and the ELCA will **empower hospitals and health clinics** with solar electric systems, reducing expenses and elevating the quality of healthcare service delivery while training local people in operations and maintenance.



Not everyone is ready for a full residential solar energy system. But, everyone can take "Small steps with Solar." RREAL is pleased to announce retail partnerships with Voltaic Systems, and Solavore. Voltaic Systems offers solar charging devices, including backpacks, brief cases, and smaller packs and chargers. Solavore offers solar ovens that cook with the sun instead of electricity or fuel. You can support RREAL by purchasing merchandise through us. Visit our [website](#), or call us to find out more, or place an order for one of these great products!



Read more on PV for Phebe in the spring edition of *Her Voice Magazine* in the *Brainerd Dispatch*. The full article can be found [here](#).

This time next year, we hope to be building the first PV microgrid for a hospital in Africa. Let's not traverse a continent with capital intensive, centralized power infrastructure! Let's **Skip the Grid** and go directly to community owned assets that provide power at the local and regional level for health care, education and community development! Locally owned and operated. Clean and democratizing! Get involved!

### (REAL Solar Design-build Services Deploy More kW!



From a large off-grid residential system to the City Hall at the City



of Hewitt , REAL Solar continues to deploy clean energy across the upper Midwest. RREAL and REAL Solar are partnering to build systems for cities, farmers, business owners, nonprofits, churches, banks and

homeowners this year. We're excited to announce a project for the Boys and Girls Club at Red Lake as well as a grid-tied system to stabilize a new animal shelter in Cass County, Paws and Claws! Keep your eyes on our feed for updated project pics and case studies!



**2016 Made in MN Incentive Awardees Announced Soon!**

The MN Department of Commerce will announce its Made in Minnesota incentive awardees for solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in April. A total of \$15,000,000 is allocated for the program statewide. Residential systems under 10kW can receive between \$0.23 - \$0.30/kWh. Nonprofit or Government systems under 40kWh can receive between \$0.15 - \$0.25/kWh. And commercial systems under 40kW can receive between \$0.13 - \$0.23/kWh. This is a HUGE opportunity that should not be missed! We look forward to serving our clients with this historic solar incentive program! Find out more about the MiM Rebate Program [here](#).



We're also looking forward to congratulating our Technical Director, Roger Garton, on passing the upcoming NABCEP PV Installers Exam. Go, Roger! You can do it!

**ECO: Education & Community Outreach**

**White Earth Training**

RREAL is looking forward to working with our friends at Honor the Earth in the White Earth Community to provide Solar Powered Furnace design and installation training. Over the course of this year, Honor the Earth will be empowering 5-7 low-income households with solar space heating. In an area with high dependence on fuel oil, electric heat and propane, solar thermal makes so much sense. RREAL is proud to be a part of the long-term, collaborative solution.

**Solar For Schools: a great hub for STEM Education**

Imagine if schools had solar electric systems to stabilize their operating costs, so they could devote more of their resources to education. Imagine if schools had large on site solar electric systems that they could monitor at any point and time and incorporate into science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education? Imagine if schools did this across an entire region in an effective model private public partnership. Stay tuned to RREAL's website and media outlets for future announcements.

**Solar Superstar Since 7 - BJ Allen  
Featured in CERTS Women in Energy Series**



The Clean Energy Resource Teams' Minnesota Women in Energy series highlights influential women who are part of our state's energy efficiency and renewable energy industries during Women's History Month. Our very own BJ Allen was among the featured women in this series. Read interviews [here](#). RREAL is proud to have had women as construction managers and manufacturing production managers too!



RREAL's subsidiary, REAL Solar, is a full-service solar design-build firm that can deliver residential, commercial, municipal or utility scale solar solutions. Call us today to schedule a site assessment, and help you develop your project!

**RREAL's Director Honored with Climate Adaptation Award**





RREAL's Executive Director, Jason Edens, was proud to accept the MN Climate Adaptation Award. Climate Adaptation Awards recognize achievements in leadership, education, research, policies, or practices that improve resilience and advance climate adaptation in Minnesota.

After 16 years of advocating for low-income participation in the solar revolution, Jason was humbled and honored to receive the Climate

Adaptation award from State Climatologist Mark Seely and the Climate Adaptation Partnership. Recognition of this nature helps us keep up the fight on behalf of our environment and low-income neighbors!

## RREAL Meets Charities Review Council Rigorous Standards!



RREAL recently completed the rigorous vetting process in order to renew its endorsement from the Charities Review Council. We proudly display the Meets Standards® seal to demonstrate our commitment to best practices within the nonprofit sector and donor services.

Nonprofit organizations, such as RREAL, earn the Meets Standards® seal by voluntarily participating in Charities

Review Council's Accountability Wizard® review process. The only web-based product of its kind, the Accountability Wizard® is a time-tested tool, elevated by nationally recognized capacity building practitioners and philanthropic thought leaders. The Accountability Wizard® is based on Charities Review Council's 25 Accountability Standards®, a balance of nonprofit sector promising practices, public expectations, and legal requirements, representing the shared expectations between donors and nonprofits.

The review process examined four key areas: Public Disclosure, Governance, Financial Activity, and Fundraising. As a result, RREAL has aligned its practices, policies and procedures to widely accepted standards of accountability, leading us to greater strength, efficacy and to the achievement of the Meets Standards® seal. By participating in the Accountability Wizard® review process, RREAL demonstrates responsibility, integrity and transparency to donors as well as the general public.

When you support RREAL, you can rest assured that we will be good, ethical stewards of your contribution. Your support is much appreciated, and we will leverage your support in the most ethical and transparent manner!

## Solar Thermal Manufacturing Opportunity! The Solstis™ Solar Powered Furnace

For many years, RREAL has been fortunate to work with a committed and capable community of dealers and partners. Together, we have provided hundreds of solar heating systems to households, farms, municipalities and businesses from Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon. Thanks for helping build our clean energy future!

### Quick Links

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### 1% For the Planet



### Hero Search

Donate items to RREAL through Hero Search [HERE!](#)

We are seeking to license our technology to a partner in 2016 who has the competencies and capacity to bring the product manufacturing and distribution to its next level. Please let us know if you have any interest or opportunity to discuss the licensing opportunity. For more information visit our website: <http://www.rreal.org/#!/manufacturing-partnership/c4u8>

Every sunny day across the United States, the Solstis™ Solar Powered Furnaces kick out clean, useful and practical heat. Thank you for your partnership and solidarity with RREAL!

**Sunny regards from all of us at RREAL!**

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