



# Solar Washington Newsletter

WINTER SOLSTICE 2004

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## What's in this issue:

- ☀ [Off-grid homestead](#)
- ☀ [On-grid solar home](#)
- ☀ [Solar tour shines in 2004](#)
- ☀ [President's column](#)
- ☀ [Energy-forum advice](#)
- ☀ [Solar-summit buzz](#)

## Quick takes:

### **Wall warts hog energy**

AC power supplies typically waste 58 billion kilowatt-hours nationwide each year, or about the output from 10 large power plants. Worst are linear power supplies, which are warm to the touch even when not charging. For a better alternative, see [www.efficientpowersupplies.org](http://www.efficientpowersupplies.org).

### **Colorado goes green**

Colorado voters approved a ballot measure in November that requires power utilities to generate 10 percent of the state's electricity from green sources such as solar and wind by 2015.

## **Off-grid living never so easy**

Many of us moved off grid a decade or more ago to live a simpler, better life. We were fully braced to sacrifice modern comforts. We bravely severed critical links to society, and so what?. TV? Hah! Good riddance to that garbage. Doctors? We ate vegetables. Lights? We lit candles. Internet? We didn't even know what that was.

Those days are gone. Off-grid living is no longer a one-way trip to the Stone Age. We have the whole world on TV. We're tuned in to satellite internet. We read by high-tech lights. Shoot. We even have hot showers. And everything is powered by the sun!



So what have we lost? Go to [www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/1off-grid.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/1off-grid.pdf)

## **On-grid solar never so smart**

When I first met Carol, she had a huge NEC code book flopped open on the kitchen table, and she was muttering something about code-compliant wiring. But despite having no background in either solar power or electrical wiring, Carol managed to install one of the smartest solar systems going: solar panels connected directly to the grid. And she did it by herself. (OK, her husband, Gary, helped.)



See Carol's story on how she did it and Josey's grudging admission that Carol's grid-intertied system is way smarter than his off-grid system. Go to [www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/2on-grid.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/2on-grid.pdf)

## **2004 Solar Tour is big success**

This solar thing is catching on. Washington had more than 100 homes, schools, businesses and other sites on this year's ASES Solar Tour. That's twice as many as we had in 2003. See Pam's story for details. See [www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/3solartour.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/3solartour.pdf)

## **PV makers hit 740 MW**

*Solar Today* reports that global photovoltaic manufacturing capacity reached some 740 megawatts in 2003. At that rate, we're adding more than 2 megawatts of solar power each and every day.

## **Outages are expensive**

For every \$100 that Americans pay on their electricity bills, they spend another \$50 on losses from power outages and damage caused by brownouts and voltage spikes, according to the Electric Power Research Institute.

## **We're Solar Washington**

Solar Washington is a chapter of the American Solar Energy Society. We're a private, not-for-profit association for people and organizations interested in solar power, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

### **Website and email:**

[www.solarwashington.org](http://www.solarwashington.org)

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**Phone: (206) 222-7113**

**Next meeting:** January 6, 2005, at the Northwest Solar Center in Seattle. All of us at Solar Washington hope to see you there.

## **Our president's column**

### **It's all about outreach**

You asked for education and outreach, and you'll get it in 2005. The New Year is packed with solar activities around the state. Check out Pam's column for details. See [www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/4president.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/4president.pdf)

### **Energy forum sets it straight**

Solar advocates made their voices heard at a recent renewable-energy and energy-efficiency forum in Ellensburg. More than 100 people from various industries provided direct feedback for a report that will go straight to the Legislature. For a great summary of their advice, see Chris Herman's firsthand account. See [www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/5energyforum.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/5energyforum.pdf)

## ***Link up! It's easy at Solar Washington***

Many of you SW members have your contact information on the [Members & Links](#) page on our website. But hey, lots of you don't. You know who you are.

So get connected. It's not automatic, but it's not hard either. Just shoot off an email to our web guru, George Meyer, at [gmeyer@solarwashington.org](mailto:gmeyer@solarwashington.org) and let him know...

1) Your name. 2) Your email address (optional) to post on our website. 3) Your company's name. 4) Your URL (web address). If you don't have a website, we can list your phone number.

## ***Northwest Solar Summit: the skinny***

SW's prez tells us the buzz from the recent solar summit in Seattle. Pam writes about the red-hot market for polycrystalline PV, how an eclectic batch of WSU students plan to win a national contest to build a super solar-powered house and the progress of some terrific green programs. See [www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/6solarsummit.pdf](http://www.solarwashington.org/newsletters/0412/6solarsummit.pdf)

## ***The last word ...***

This issue kicks off a brand-new, email-friendly format for our newsletter. So let us know how you like it. Is it too big for your virtual mailbox? Can you only do snail mail? Let us know at [newsletter@solarwashington.org](mailto:newsletter@solarwashington.org).

Our next issue will plug you into the brightest and most energy-efficient LED lights going. I'm writing this blurb with the help of a 36-LED light that shines nearly twice the light on my work as a 75-watt incandescent bulb would from the same distance. And it does so with 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the electricity. We'll tell you what this is all about and how to build your own LED light.

– Josey Paul, editor