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2015 Historical SOLAR GROWTH IN THE NORTHEAST

By George Harvey

Over 60% of all new generating capacity added in the United States in the first ten months of 2015 was renewable, according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This agency only counts utility-scale installations, so new small solar capacity, roughly half of the total for solar, was not counted.

One renewable energy story came from New Hampshire. At the beginning of 2015, it had only ten megawatts (MW) of solar capacity. A huge increase in the net metering cap, intended to keep solar installers busy for quite a while, was quickly met, and many solar installers began having trouble proceeding on projects.

A solar project commissioned in early November in Peterborough, New Hampshire, deserves attention. This array, in a town of fewer than 7,000 people, has a capacity of 944 kilowatts (kW). Lacking incentives, New Hampshire has lagged behind other states, and this project is the largest in New Hampshire to date. It should save the town between \$250,000 and \$500,000 over the next twenty years.

In New York, Governor Cuomo set a goal to get to 50% renewable power by 2030. The state is also trying to get 150,000 families supplied by solar power by 2020. New York's solar initiative, NY-Sun, has a program designed to help families of below-average income get their own solar systems.

New York has banned fracking. It is supporting the EPA's Clean Power Plan in court. It is taking legal action against ExxonMobil for allegedly deceiving both stockholders and the public about climate change for decades.

Interesting projects include a 472-kW system belonging to four wineries in the Finger Lakes, getting them 50% to 100% of their electricity from the sun. Three ski resorts will rely on solar power for their lifts and snow-making equipment. And New York will have the tallest Passive-House building in the world, a Cornell University dormitory on Roosevelt Island, in New York City.

In Massachusetts, whose new governor seems uninterested in renewable energy, the state has been slipping from its leadership role. Solar incentives were not renewed by the legislature, leaving the solar industry very much adrift. Some people blame lobbying by utilities.

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This 944kW solar farm serves Peterborough, NH went online early November, 2015. Courtesy photo.

We CAN Prevent Climate Disaster!



Clockwise: Dr. James Hansen, Ban Ki-Moon, John Kerry, Bill Gates, Bernie Sanders, Pope Francis, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Heinberg, Richard Branson and Elon Musk. Courtesy photos.

By Jim Stiles

Our future is in danger, but we have a powerful solution. We have the ability to face climate change head on. A carbon compensation fee levied upon polluters can be an important tool to reduce carbon emissions. This will help nearly everyone both in their pocketbooks and with their health. And it can save the planet. Green Energy Times refers to this solution as a carbon compensation fee because it compen-

sates all of us for the damage polluters do.

British Columbia (BC) introduced its carbon tax in 2008, and it has been so successful that it is now being copied by Alberta, a province that has been dependent on fossil fuel production. It is time to do it here, in the United States. Progress is being made to introduce such fees in Vermont and Massachusetts, and we hope other states will follow. Vermont's proposed plan is based on the successful implementation in BC.

How does this work? Carbon compensation fees would be charged on fossil fuels based on their carbon content. The income from the fees would reduce everyone's taxes and help support people with lower incomes to compensate for any extra burden they would bear. Higher cost of fuel makes energy conservation measures more attractive. When implemented in Vermont, the fees would lower taxes such as the

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Paris - COP21: Encouraging Promises!

By George Harvey

The news of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) on climate change came thick and fast as the conference progressed. There was a lot more to say than there was time to say it. We kept a diary of the events as we found them, however. (The dates represent when we saw the news, which was, in many cases, the day after the events took place.)

November 29 – As negotiators gathered in Paris for the on climate Change, the question of the day was “Can we avoid

an apocalypse?” As the meetings began, nearly every country involved had agreed that an increase of 2° Celsius from pre-industrial times was too much for safety. The promises the countries have already made would cover about 90% of the carbon emission reductions needed to slow climate change.

After the terrorist attacks of November 13 in Paris, security was high and many people worried about disruptions to the proceedings.

November 30 – There are 195 countries represented at COP21. Leaders of 147 of them came to address the conference.

There had been over 2000 demonstrations and protests across the world. The poorest countries have expressed a fear of “being left behind.” Many people from developed countries were afraid the conference would fail generally. In London alone, 50,000 people took to the streets in a march.

December 1 – National leaders addressed the conference, saying that the stakes were too high to allow the conference to end without success on agreement on how to meet a goal of 2° or less.

Indigenous people from around the world gathered at Paris to bring attention to damage their homelands

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West Hill House B&B

A Green Destination in Vermont

By Michelle Harrison, GET Staff



Left: West Hill House B&B owns 26% of the array totaling just under 30kW peak power, meeting 100% of their electric power needs. Below: Solar hot water panels that supply 2/3rds of their hot water demands; Bottom photo: This West Hill House B&B sign leads guests back to the B&B.



Vermont is a beautiful state with many areas to explore. As a reader of Green Energy Times, finding locations with a sustainable focus for lodging, a retreat, or special event is of high interest. If your travels bring you to the Mad River Valley in the center of the state, the West Hill House B&B is the perfect choice. You should feel great staying here as it is recognized as a Green Hotel in Vermont since 2008, has received the distinction as a Green Leader at the Gold Level by Trip Advisor and has been voted as one of New England's best repeatedly by BedandBreakfast.com. West Hill House B&B is a member of Select Registry's Distinguished Inns of North America and is part of the BedandBreakfast.com Diamond Collection. Innkeepers, Peter and Susan MacLaren take environmental stewardship very seriously in their daily operation.

The West Hill House B&B is an historic 1850's home which was made into a bed and breakfast in the early 1980's. In 2006, Peter and Susan MacLaren purchased the home. For the past eight years, Peter and Susan have introduced major initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of the property such as:

- Installing a high efficiency condensing propane boiler to replace the oil boiler and propane water heaters.
- Adding a rooftop solar hot water pre-heating system which supplies two-thirds of the hot water demand year round.
- Installing complimentary EV charging stations for guests. There are two 240V 80A chargers for Teslas and a 240V J1772 at 40A for other EVs. An EV can be completely recharged overnight. The implementation of the Tesla chargers allows the West Hill House B&B to be a great destination for people traveling from afar.
- Becoming the largest private investor in the Poultney, VT solar farm which is designed and built by Same Sun of Vermont. West Hill House B&B owns 26% of the array totaling just under 30kW peak power. This covers 100% of their electric power needs including the EV chargers!



years with the tax credits. Over the twenty-five year life of the system, the West Hill House B&B will offset approximately 470 tons of carbon dioxide.

"It's very important for us to reduce our carbon footprint as much as possible. An investment of this scale into a solar farm is a great complement to our Tesla-designated charging stations. It's very important to our many Tesla driving guests to know that when they are charging their vehicle and enjoying overnight hospitality, a minimal impact on the environment is being made," said West Hill House B&B Co-Owner Peter MacLaren.

"We also hope that we can set an example for other Vermont businesses and show that not only do green technologies make sense economically and environmentally, but you can also support local green energy companies," MacLaren said.

The West Hill House B&B has also made many other initiatives throughout the years. Main entrances have an air-lock entry (double door system) to minimize drafts. Food waste is composted through a service where it is processed and sold to farmers and gardeners. High efficiency light bulbs are used throughout the facility. The Handsome Red Barn on the facility is used for events year round thanks to insulation improvements. A shuttle bus is provided in the winter for those guests wishing to ski at the local resorts.

Another perk of staying at the West Hill House B&B is the complimentary, reusable water bottles given to every guest. Peter and Susan encourage visitors to use the reusable water bottles and drink the beautifully tasting water from their spring-fed well instead of using bottled water.

The West Hill House B&B has a well-established environmental policy and environmentally-friendly purchasing policy which are shared on its website. Whether you come from within the state or far away, the West Hill House B&B can accommodate your needs with sustainability in the forefront.

West Hill House B&B



Your 'Green Hotel' beside Sugarbush
Great Ski packages

Tesla friendly – 2 x 80A chargers

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