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# Missoula County

## Media Release

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### Missoula Electric Cooperative to Honor Missoula County

Missoula Electric Cooperative (MEC) General Manager Mark Hayden will be presenting the Missoula County Commission with a commemorative plaque recognizing their participation in the Cooperative's community solar program, known as the Missoula Electric Community Solar (MEC Solar) program. This award presentation will take place at 9 a.m. on Thursday August 8, in Room 206 of the County's Administration Building, located at 199 West Pine Street. Members of the media are welcome to attend the presentation.

"Missoula County is proud to have made this sustainable investment in our community," Commissioner Cola Rowley said. "We look forward to utilizing clean, local energy sources."

Community solar installations have emerged in western Montana as a result of increased public demand for more locally sourced renewable energy options. MEC Solar allows participants to purchase electrical output from one or more of the solar panels housed in a centrally located array that is built and maintained by Missoula Electric. The model was designed for consumers who want locally produced solar power, but for one reason or another cannot partake in a traditional, privately-owned array.

The County was an early adopter in community solar, initially investing in the final 10 panels available in MEC's Phase I near Lolo earlier this year. Because panel demand significantly outpaced supply, Missoula Electric immediately began searching for a Phase II site and ultimately partnered with the Frenchtown School District. The Phase II installation marks the first time an electric utility and a school have partnered on a community solar installation in the State of Montana.

"Investing in MEC Solar Phase II was an easy choice for the Cooperative because of the commitment of our members," MEC General Manager, Mark Hayden said. "The strong partnerships we have with our member-owners like Missoula County and the Frenchtown School District and others have made Phase II a reality."

When additional panels from a second array were proposed, Missoula County committed to the output of 49 panels in Phase II, or an estimated 5 percent of annual energy usage from Missoula Electric.