

# Missoula County Media Release

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## Missoula County Furthers Clean Energy Goals with Solar Array Purchase

Missoula County will move a step closer to achieving its renewable energy goals by purchasing a portion of the clean electricity generated by the Missoula Electric Cooperation's newest community solar array in Bonner.

The array, called the Solarshare K3 Garden, is located on the roof of the KettleHouse Brewery. Commissioners Dave Strohmaier, Josh Slotnick and Juanita Vero will tour the site with MEC General Manager Mark Hayden, as well as Missoula City Council President Bryan von Lossberg, at **1 p.m. Friday, Nov. 22**. Members of the media are invited to join.

By subscribing to 37 of the 189 panels that make up the project, the county will own 20% of the electricity generated by the array for 25 years. The cost to purchase the output of the 37 panels is about \$24,000.

"Missoula County is committed to 100% clean electricity by 2030, and that means maximizing our investments in renewable energy today," Strohmaier said. "This is a great opportunity to purchase clean, affordable energy, and we encourage county residents who are MEC members to join us and buy into the project if they're able."

The Solarshare K3 Garden is MEC's third community solar project. Missoula County also owns the output of 10 panels from the Solarshare 1 project in Lolo and 49 panels from the Solarshare 2 project in Frenchtown. With the K3 Garden purchase, about 63% percent of county operations are now powered by clean energy.

Two major goals aimed at addressing climate change spurred the county's participation in the Solarshare K3 Garden: In March, the county adopted a goal of [carbon neutrality in county government operations by 2035](#), and in April, commissioners approved a joint resolution with the City of Missoula, which also subscribes to output from K3 Garden panels, to achieve [100% clean electricity](#) for the Missoula urban area by 2030.

"Our goals are ambitious but necessary, given the great risks that climate change poses to Missoula County," said Diana Maneta, the county's energy conservation and sustainability coordinator. "In addition to participating in Solarshare K3, we're looking at opportunities to use energy more efficiently, incorporate solar into our buildings and support the development of larger-scale clean energy projects."

The county, in partnership with Climate Smart Missoula and the city, is also leading the [Climate Ready Missoula](#) planning process to prepare for the local impacts of climate change.

Several organizations have recognized Missoula County for its sustainability efforts this year. These accolades include:

- Silver designation from SolSmart, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that recognizes local governments for making it faster, easier and more affordable for property owners to go solar. Missoula County was deemed the first SolSmart county in Montana when it earned a Bronze designation in 2017.
- A 2019 U.S. Green Building Council Mountain West Leadership Award for the Missoula County Courthouse, which achieved LEED Silver status following a years-long renovation.
- The Emerging Conservationist Award from the Missoula Conservation Roundtable, which honored Maneta for her role in establishing goals and regulations related to renewable energy and sustainability.

For more information, call Maneta at 406-258-3424 or email [dmaneta@missoulacounty.us](mailto:dmaneta@missoulacounty.us). More details on Missoula County's sustainability initiatives are online at <http://missoula.co/sustainability>.

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