

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Solarize Chicagoland Reaches Second Goal, Lowering Solar Pricing**

*Bulk Purchase Program Continues to Help Chicago Area Businesses and Homeowners*

**Chicago, IL** - The Solarize Chicagoland group buy program is gaining momentum as it surpassed its second goal of 150 kilowatts (kW) when the 22nd homeowner signed on to go solar. Since then the program has grown to include 24 properties, with more contracts being signed every week. Offered for the first time to Chicago area property owners, Cook, DuPage, Kane, and Will Counties have partnered with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) to support the bulk solar group purchase program for residents and businesses located across all four counties.

This grassroots program combines volume purchasing with community education to make solar more accessible and affordable for area property owners. Thanks to Christopher Gotschall, of Evanston, Emmy Lou John, of Aurora, and other Solarize Chicagoland participants, the program's pricing has been lowered below its already lower-than-market rate. Gotschall's and John's signatures helped put the program past its second benchmark of 150kW of solar.

"We try to source our energy from renewable and sustainable sources as much as possible to combat climate change, and for years have wanted to install solar panels but it was never affordable," said Gotschall. Luckily, through Solarize Chicagoland Gotschall learned about the "incentives available and the benefits of installing now instead of waiting. It's something we can finally afford!"

"As retirees on a fixed income, we are glad to know our electric bills will decrease," said Emmy Lou John, another participant. "At the same time, and more importantly to my husband and I, we think using solar is a hopeful action and shows the importance we place on caring for creation."

This achievement triggers a discount for program participants, as pricing will decrease when the group collectively reaches benchmarks of 250 kW, 500 kW, with a final reduction at 1000 kW.

Solarize Chicagoland started Solar Power Hour informational sessions in late April. During these free, hour-long presentations, Solarize Chicagoland representatives give a brief explanation of the program, discuss the projected costs of installing solar and highlight the benefits of going solar. Presentations are scheduled at various locations around the Chicago area now through September 10th, 2019; all are free and open to the public. Interested property owners have until September 30th to decide whether to participate in the program. A complete schedule of the Solar Power Hours can be found at [SolarizeChicagoland.com](http://SolarizeChicagoland.com).

"We're trying to simplify the process of going solar," said Peter Murphy, Solar Program Director for the MREA. "It can seem complicated, so we present clear information and answer folks'

questions at our Solar Power Hours and then they can determine for themselves whether solar is right for them.”

Christina Uzzo, Environmental Outreach Coordinator and CUB point person on Solarize Chicagoland, frequently talks to homeowners about how to go solar. “At CUB we are very excited about the new solar incentives available to Illinois residents, but we know that with all the new buzz around solar it can be confusing to figure out what’s best for you. I love giving the Solar Power Hour presentations because they are a great way to get into communities and talk about solar face-to-face,” Uzzo said.

Part of making solar simple involves helping select a solar installer to work with. Solarize Chicagoland’s advisory committee is comprised of sustainability staff from Cook, DuPage, Kane, and Will Counties which reviewed a competitive request for proposals issued by the MREA, and selected a single installer to help carry out the program. This ensures customers get the simplicity of a single installer and the confidence that the selection was made from a number of competitive choices. Gotschall echoed this, saying, “Having Solarize Chicagoland vet suppliers was huge—I didn’t have to spend hours researching and comparing, they did all that work for me and negotiated the best prices.” GRNE Solar was selected because of their diverse staff of trusted, licensed, NABCEP certified solar installers and their longstanding experience and reputation in the state.

The discounts available through the Solarize Chicagoland program, combined with the current federal and state incentives and the likelihood of solar installation prices increasing in the future due to increasing demand, make this year the ideal time to go solar.

Visit the website [SolarizeChicagoland.com](http://SolarizeChicagoland.com) to learn more about the program.

*The MREA was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit shortly after the first [Energy Fair](#) in 1990. MREA’s mission is to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715-592-6595 or visit [www.midwestrenew.org](http://www.midwestrenew.org).*

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