

HELI GRAPHS

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Newsletter of the Illinois Solar Energy Association □ September 2007, Vol. 26, No.3

State Legislation Update

By Bruce Davidson



SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois legislative session turned out to be quite eventful for solar and other renewable energy issues! Four bills were passed by the Legislature and have been signed by the Governor:

Utility Regulation: Perhaps the most far-reaching legislation was House Bill 1592 (Public Act 095-0481) which provided rate relief to utility customers. But just as importantly, this legislation:

- Established the Illinois Power Agency to control the process by which power is purchased by the utilities.
- Set energy efficiency goals that utilities will meet by modifying their customers' energy usage.
- Established a Renewable Portfolio Standard that mandates utility usage of renewable energy sources, with a preference for wind energy.
- Continued the funding of the Renewable Energy Trust Fund at its current rate until 12/12/15. This is the Fund that pays the State rebate for solar installations and funds grants for wind installations. This extended funding rate is inadequate to meet the demand for these rebates and grants.

Net Metering: Of major importance to the ease and benefit of making solar and wind installations is Senate Bill 0680 (Public Act 095-0420) that requires utilities to provide net metering to their customers who have renewable energy systems up to 2 mW.

For customers with generators of 40 kW and below, equipment is paid for by the utility. Customers with larger generators pay the costs of the net metering equipment. Residential customers are given credits for excess power generated but are not paid. Nonresidential

customers are paid monthly for excess power at the utility's avoided cost. A statewide interconnection standard must be enacted by the ICC within 120 days.

The act makes it clear that Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) are the property of the customer and the utility cannot claim them as a condition of net metering connection. Prior to the act's passage, ComEd required some residential customers to relinquish the RECs as a condition of their net metering agreement.

Renewable Energy Grants for Schools: HB0285 Public Act 95-0046) authorizes grants, *subject to appropriation*, to schools for renewable energy systems – 50 percent of their cost, up to \$1 million.

Wind Farm Zoning: HB0620 (Public Act 95-0203) authorizes counties and municipalities to regulate wind farms siting within their zoning jurisdictions.

An important bill concerning **Homeowners Associations Restrictions and an Energy Conservation Building Code, SB0526**, still is under consideration. A final action deadline in the House has been extended to Sept. 5. If this bill passed in the House, the Senate would have to reconsider it because the building code language was not in the version it passed.

For more information on these bills, you can access www.ilga.gov and use the menu to search for the bill, where you'll find a synopsis and the full text of the legislation.

Federal Legislation

For up-to-date information on what is happening at the federal level, visit the Solar Energy Industry Association at www.seia.org and the American Wind Energy Association at www.awea.org.



Have you had a chance to view the Cool Globes exhibit along Lake Michigan north of the Chicago museum park? Check out solar powered "Lights Without Limits" by artist Matt Federico, sponsored by Rosenthal Manufacturing. ISEA's very own Ted Lowe and Tom DeBates designed and implemented the solar powered portion.

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Hey, Ho, There You Go, Ohio! (apologies to Chrissie Hynde)

Letter from the President

The American Solar Energy Society's "Solar 2007" conference was held in Cleveland on July 7-12, and it was a hit. Rumors that a letdown would occur after records were set last year in Denver and that few would show up at a Rustbelt locale were mistaken.

Before I go into the serious aspects, I must say that my first lengthy visit to downtown Cleveland, (as opposed to brief airport-edge city occasions), was really enjoyable. I am not a fan of entertainment pavilions, but the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is an incredible place that depicts not only the music, but also the cultural and historical aspects of the time. Seeing the stars' costumes hanging up was a little like looking at Civil War uniforms worn at Gettysburg.

But to business. The theme of Cleveland's Solar 2007 was "Sustainable Energy Puts America to Work." And behind the rhetoric and still relatively modest incentives and policies that Ohio offers for solar and wind power, lie huge potential. Ohio features a very impressive amalgam of research institutes, universities and businesses that are developing new solar and wind products away from the glamour of Silicon Valley and Freiburg. More importantly, Ohio is next door to another simmering market volcano – the Northeastern states, whose growth may equal California's within the decade.

At Solar 2007, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland announced goals for their Renewable Portfolio Standards of 3,500 megawatts of photovoltaic installations by 2020 through 2025. This exceeds California's goal and is backed up by considerable incentives, as well as electricity prices that are higher than ours—even with the recent increase.

Large commitments to solar thermal and wind power also were made. Ohio is positioning itself to be the Midwest's clean power manufacturer, in time to serve the eastern U.S. markets next door and in gearing up to global competition. It is an action that we in Illinois need to emulate if we expect serious

economic development benefits from solar and wind power.

Speaking of Illinois, I am happy that two more legislative acts, **Net Metering** (SB 680) and a continuation of the Renewable Energy Trust Fund to 2015 and establishment of a **Renewable Portfolio Standard (SB 1592)** have been signed into law by Gov. Blagojevich.

By this fall, Illinois should continue to grow its solar and wind power markets to the level that a state that uses 4 percent of the United States' energy and 1 percent of the world's should achieve.

I enjoyed seeing many of you at the Renewable Energy Fair in Oregon. I look forward to visiting many of your homes and buildings to be featured in the upcoming Illinois National Solar Tour on October 6. (at right) We need your help to make the tour in Illinois a success, so please contact Lisa Albrecht at albrechtlisa@gmail.com to participate.

Thanks very much. See you at an event!

— Mark Burger, ISEA President

Want a Rebate? Get in Queue

According to Tom Coe of the Illinois DCEO, the Renewable Energy Resource Program (RERP) fund has been exhausted. New funding depends on the Illinois budget approval, which is waiting on the electric rates rollback negotiations. \$1 million has been requested, which is likely to be allocated once the budget is approved.

There was a rush of applications in April to meet the 2006-2007 deadline. All of the funds were spent and up to 40 applications are in queue for 2007-2008.

People interested in rebates should fill out the 2006 application to get in the queue (currently 58 applications totaling about \$300k). When (if) funds become available, the queue will be processed on a first-come-first-serve basis.

New 2007-2008 guidelines are essentially the same as 2006-2007, but won't be published until funds are available.

By Ted Lowe, ISEA Secretary, Web Master



Illinois National Solar Tour and Tour Guide

Dear Members and Friends:

The National Tour of Solar Buildings, which will be held Saturday, October 6, 2007, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will include tours of homes and businesses of several of our members.

People interested in learning about solar (and wind) energy for their homes, businesses, and schools will have a handy resource to help them check out real-life examples.

Nearly 90 homes, businesses, and other buildings will be on the tour this year. Illinois Solar Energy Association is publishing a Tour Guide for Illinois sites of the tour. About 10,000 copies will be issued across the state.

With rising utility prices, global climate change, energy security concerns, and increased interest by state policy-makers to make renewables a major source of energy, there has never been a better time to raise public awareness about the hundreds of buildings in Illinois that get some or all of their energy from the sun and wind.

The ISEA needs volunteers to set up and coordinate local tours, and to host tour sites. If you are interested in either, please call or email me at 708-267-7965 or mark.burger@illinoissolar.org.

— Mark Burger,
ISEA President



Personal Turbines Stall High Energy Costs

By Jason Carson Wilson, *Journal-Standard*



Troy Rudy's personal wind tower is wired to his home's electrical panel.
Joe Tamborello photo, The Journal-Standard

FREEPORT – Wind has shaved some cost from an area man's power bill. A 35-foot-high, 12-ft.-diameter wind turbine tower on Troy Rudy's Crane's Grove Road property has saved him \$80 since June 1.

Rudy investigated whether a wind turbine was worthwhile. His research revealed sufficient wind speed, and good wind months September to June.

Flagstaff, Ariz.-based Southwest Wind Energy manufactured Rudy's \$10,000 Skystream 3.7 turbine. The company has sold 500 units since December 2006, a spokesperson said. It has also sold 80,000 battery-powered Air-X units since being introduced 10 years ago.

Rudy owns one of them as well, which generates 400 watts of electricity. The Skystream 3.7 is designed to supplement his 1847 farmhouse's energy needs, Rudy said, and that the wind energy could save him 40 to 80 percent. It's wired directly to his home's electrical panel. As wind increases, his meter slows or runs backwards, he said.

Its benefits have seemingly come with no drawbacks, including noise. "(If) you're sitting on the deck, you can't hear it over the rustle of the trees," Rudy said. His neighbors seem to concur. Rudy said he hasn't gotten a negative reaction from them.

Stephenson County zoning regulations didn't hinder him. There's no ordinance, Rudy said, controlling their use. However, county planning and zoning director Terry Groves proposed an ordinance regarding personal wind turbines.

That proposed legislation, Groves said, permits 60- to 90-foot turbines in agriculturally-zoned areas and requires a setback 1.1 times its height, which includes the blades. He noted there are 15 to 20 pending permit requests.

While properties in agriculturally zoned areas are regulated, Groves said state statutes keep counties from exercising their authority on farms.

Installing the wind turbine proved to be the only obstacle. "The biggest hurdle (was) digging the hole," Rudy said.

—From the July 11 issue of *Journal-Standard*

[Note: The Stephenson County Board approved controversial wind farm zoning changes at a meeting in July that remove wind farms from the special use category. Even so, county officials are uncertain whether approval of the zoning changes will be challenged in court.)

ISEA Events

Next Event – Solar Buildings Tour

The Illinois National Solar Tour will serve as ISEA's fall 2007 membership meeting, to be held Sat., Oct. 6. Read sidebar, opposite page, for more details.

Evelyn Pease Pleases

ISEA members and friends took advantage of the opportunity to tour the LEED-Gold-rated Evelyn Pease Tyner Nature Center, in Glenview, Ill., on Sat., June 9.

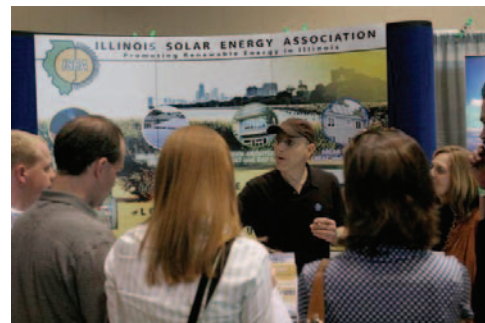


Bruce Davidson explains the legislative scene impacting solar and wind power.

The center features floor-to-ceiling windows that look out on Glenview's Air Station Prairie. Its concave, sloping roof is 2/3 green roof and 1/3 building-integrated solar PV panels, which are embedded in the roof's surface.

The abundant natural light provided a comfortable setting for a view of the building's technology. Rosario Milana, architect and principal of the Green Energy Collaborative, is the integrator of the center's solar features. The solar panels were supplied by Open Energy.

— By Carol Gulyas, ISEA VP, Director



Sustainable Lifestyle Fair

ISEA continued the tradition of exhibiting and meeting at the IREA Sustainable Lifestyle Fair in Oregon, IL

A mini PV unit with battery, inverter and charge controller were on display that shows the output from the module. The August membership meeting was held after the fair on Sat. Aug 11, at the Patchwork Inn in Oregon.

ISEA Members Make News

While watching the metropolitan Chicago news, reading the community newspaper, or scanning regional Web sites, you may have recognized some familiar names and faces recently.

Illinois Solar Energy Association members have been getting their share of the limelight lately ... or glare of the camera light, in some cases.

Membership, as the saying goes, has its benefits.

Jim Gill, Ted Lowe, Jerry Marconi, John Janata, and Tom Benson have been approached by the media to offer their insights and showcase their personal investments in and commitment to renewable energy:

Government Incentives Heat up Solar Power

By Elisabeth Kwak-Hefferan,
Medill Reports Chicago



Ted Lowe, ISEA secretary, installed a photovoltaic system on his Wheaton home about three years ago.

WHEATON – Solar power sounds like the perfect solution for eco-friendly homeowners. Just install a few rooftop panels and watch as carbon dioxide emissions and electric bills plummet.

Renewable solar energy does come with a steep up-front investment, but environmentalists with thin wallets are in luck. State and federal incentives help people justify the splurge on solar — perks experts say are vital for this burgeoning clean energy source.

"[Incentives] are extremely important, if not pivotal," said Ted Lowe, secretary of the Illinois Solar Energy Association. His

Wheaton home sports a solar electric system of its own that the engineer and computer scientist installed himself.

"There are some people who would do it regardless, but those are probably the really dedicated people who want to do the right thing and protect the environment," Lowe said. "You add the incentives in and it makes it affordable for people who might be on the edge."

Illinois gives individuals who install home solar panels a rebate of 30 percent of their system's cost, up to \$10,000. On top of that, homeowners get a one-time federal tax credit of 30 percent of the panels' cost, capped at \$2,000—and the deal may get sweeter. If the energy bill passed by the U.S. House becomes law, that cap is history.

Solar energy fans have two choices: photovoltaic (PV) panels or solar thermal panels. PV panels convert the sun's energy directly into electricity for the home. Solar thermal panels collect that energy that heats water for direct use or to provide home heating.

Even with a helping hand from the government, solar power is pricey. But proponents say it's all worthwhile.



Lowe shows off the \$5,000 rebate he received from Illinois for installing a solar power system at home.

Lowe pointed to three major benefits of home solar power: reduced dependence on foreign oil, savings on energy costs and lowered greenhouse gas emissions.

"Eventually, renewable energy will be the no-brainer," he said.

—Excerpts from Aug. 8 issue, Medill Reports

Car Eats its Vegetables

By Lori Rackl, Sun-Times



Jim Gill checks out a homemade device used to filter vegetable oil he burns in his modified Jetta. Photo/ Keith Hale/Sun-Times

OAK PARK – Jim Gill said he bought about 40 gallons of petroleum diesel last year for his Volkswagen Jetta. And he drove the car roughly 8,000 miles. No, his VW doesn't get 200 miles a gallon. It's just that Gill uses something else as the main source of fuel for his silver 2000 Jetta. Gill likes getting his fuel from a renewable resource -- vegetable oil.

"It's the right thing to do," says Gill, an environmental engineer. "And the price is right, too: I get the oil for free."

Instead of pulling up to the pump at the corner gas station, Gill makes periodic trips to an ice-cream shop in Oak Park and to his family's favorite Japanese restaurant in Forest Park to pick up oil they used for french fries and tempura. They're happy to get rid of it; restaurants typically pay someone to take it.

Gill runs the discarded oil through a homemade filter in his garage to weed out any "yucky food gunk," then pours the filtered vegetable oil into a secondary fuel tank that he had installed in the trunk of the car.

The setup suits him just fine. Federal environmental officials worry, though, that converted cars might emit more soot. "We really can't recommend it," says John Millet, a spokesman for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Right now, there is no EPA-certified conversion kit or a pure vegetable oil that is a registered fuel.

It cost him nearly \$1,600 to buy the Frybrid conversion kit that allows his diesel engine to run on straight vegetable oil. Gill paid another \$1,100 to have the conversion kit installed. (Only cars with diesel engines can be converted.)

But there is one, uh, side effect of converting to run on oil that's been used to make french fries and tempura: the scent of fried food that trails Gill. Which makes it easy for his middle-school son to know he's there when he picks him up at school.

"He'll tell me, 'I knew you were here. I could smell you.'"

—Excerpts from April 22 issue, Sun Times

Here Comes the Sun

By Bob Uphues, *Riverside/Brookfield Landmark*

Michelle and Jerry Marconi built their vacation home in western Illinois incorporating solar and wind power. The home is powered by both a wind turbine and solar panels.

Before buying a 6-acre piece of property in western Illinois back in 2003, Riverside attorney Jerry Marconi never gave much thought to green issues. On a ridge overlooking a small river on a wooded lot surrounded by farmland and a 2,000-acre hunt club, the home is a weekend retreat for the family. But after building a 3,000-square-foot log home on that land, just east of the town of Savanna, near the Mississippi River, he's become something of an expert.

At first he looked into what it would take to put his property "on the grid," but the cost was exorbitant and the result, he said, would have been "for the pleasure of having a monthly electric bill."

So instead, the house is powered completely by both solar and wind power that Marconi said has probably already paid for itself.

"I have about \$12,000 in the system, and I'm done," said Marconi, who said that he will incur other costs as he expands the system and needs to replace batteries. "I've never gotten [an electric] bill. It's truly free power."

In November 2006, Marconi also added a Bergey wind turbine, some 8.5 feet in diameter, set on an 80-foot aluminum pole secured by cables. Between the solar panels and the wind turbine, Marconi said, the house can generate power 24 hours a day in any season.

Marconi said he hopes to double the number of solar panels this fall and plans to add a solar thermal system.

—Excerpts from July 24 issue, *Riverside/Brookfield Landmark*

WGN Shines Spotlight on Members' Homes, Biz

The homes of John Janata, of Berwyn, and Ted Lowe, of Wheaton and Tom Benson's World's Largest Laundromat, Berwyn, were filmed by WGN for a story on green buildings in Chicago.

WGN morning show producer Terry Barthel had contacted ISEA for referrals for some solar energy-powered buildings in the Chicago area.

Recent Installations

Solar Power Heats Hot Spot

By Sarah Feinstein, *Solar Systems Inc.*

Taco Burrito King heralded Cinco de Mayo with the grand opening of its Niles location on May 5. It's sure to be the hottest restaurant in town, thanks—in part—to the use of solar energy.

Taco Burrito King's building's roof is lined with ten solar panels that can heat 680 gallons of hot water daily.

Additional energy-saving practices include radiant floor heat and centralized prep kitchen that consolidates the cooking for several restaurants.



Taco Burrito King may be the state's largest solar hot water system on a restaurant.

Solar energy is not new to TBK—this is the third system that the company has installed. This is the third system that the company has installed. The first system was installed in 2004 at its Belmont St., Chicago location and heats more than 600 gallons of water daily. TBK's president, Salvador Lamas, satisfied with the results on the first installation, had a solar heat and hot water system installed on his own home.

"The solar system had already been proven," said Salvador Lamas. "The solar panels have become a trademark for our restaurant."

It is estimated that the new system will prevent an estimated 7 tons of carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases annually. The systems were installed by Solar Service Inc. of Niles.

Horizontal Wind Turbines Power Chicago Apartments



A Helmut Jahn-designed building, featuring Aerotecture attached wind turbines and other green features, is located in an urban area on Chicago's Near North Side.

The building, operated by Mercy Lakefront Housing, has single-room-occupancy apartments. Some of the apartments house recently displaced Cabrini-Green residents.

ISEA Member Outreach Request *Member Get a Member*

Dear Fellow Member of the Illinois Solar Energy Association,

We thank you for your membership in ISEA and your commitment to our shared mission to provide energy education to the Illinois public and promote the widespread application of solar, renewable and sustainable energy methods and technologies.

This is an exciting time to be involved in renewable energy. On a daily basis, we see reports and examples of the many serious dangers of our dependence on fossil fuels. A confluence of technological, environmental, political and financial factors has placed renewable energy to the forefront of the minds of many.

Your active support has helped ISEA grow in our ability to serve you. We are fast approaching the level of 500 members and kindly ask for your assistance in helping us reach our 1,000 member goal for 2007.

We invite you to please "reach-out" to like-minded individuals! Perhaps you know of a friend, associate or family member who is interested in furthering our shared goals, but is not yet a member of the ISEA. We invite you ask them to join us—or perhaps you would consider giving the gift of a membership to someone close to you.

Signing up for a membership is fast and easy by visiting www.illinoissolar.org and clicking on "Join the ISEA."

Membership benefits include:

- Subscription to *Heliographs*, ISEA's award-winning newsletter
- Personal invitations to our every-other-month membership meetings
- Many hands-on opportunities to learn about renewable energy
- Free or discounted event admission
- Great networking opportunities with renewable energy industry professionals and many advocates

- Reduced membership fee to the American Solar Energy Society
- Discounts for solar products
- Business members receive free website and newsletter ads
- Tax deductible dues and donations
- Good feelings that you are making a difference!

Membership is a great value too! Annual membership for Students and Seniors is \$20, Individuals \$30, and Families \$40.

The larger our organization, the greater impact we can make, whatever your approach – the depletion of fossil fuels, the political and financial risks of dependence of foreign sources, or from the perspective of carbon emissions and global warming, our goals are the same – to encourage adoption of renewable energy to help to address these issues.

As always, you have our heartfelt thanks for your continued enthusiastic support of ISEA and our shared mission. A special thanks for reaching out to others that you know who may like to join the Illinois Solar Energy Association. We look forward to seeing you soon!

– ISEA Board of Directors

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HELIOGRAPHS is published quarterly by the Illinois Solar Energy Association (ISEA). Edited by Kate Bachman.

Membership information, updated information, and assistance in locating resources can be obtained on ISEA's website:

www.illinoissolar.org

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ISEA Offers **Solar 101, Wind 101 Workshops**



Are you thinking about investing in a solar or wind energy system, but want to be able to compare all the options?

Do you have friends, neighbors, prospective customers or anyone asking about all kinds of info about solar that you can't answer or just takes a lot of time?

The Illinois Solar Energy Association, a 501-C-3 organization dedicated to educating the public about solar, wind and other forms of renewable energy, will be conducting workshops in the Chicago metropolitan area this summer and fall.

The workshops, called **Solar 101** and **Wind 101**, will provide comprehensive and generic information on how solar energy can be used. The workshops will be held on Saturday mornings and are designed for the following audiences:

- Home and business owners, and decision makers for public and non-profit facilities who are considering solar and wind energy systems for their buildings.
- Architects, engineers, realtors, developers, contractors, government officials and other professionals who are seeking basic information about solar and wind energy systems.

The workshops cover a basic overview of how solar and wind energy systems work in Illinois, the types of systems that provide heating, hot water, cooling and electricity, how to choose between different types of systems, economics and regulatory issues.

More than 160 people took Solar 101 in 2006, and we look forward to helping many more with Solar 101 and Wind 101 in 2007.

Information on dates, locations, costs & registration, contact:

www.illinoissolar.org/contact

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Shamrock GREEN Electric has partnered with Solar Network to be our design consultant and SunWize Technologies to be our equipment supplier. All together you can have a turn-key approach to designing and building solar system that's right for you. Turn to Shamrock GREEN Electric.

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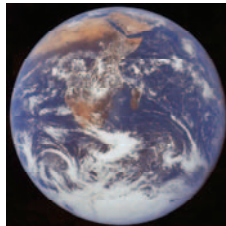
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UPCOMING ISEA EVENTS

October 6 <i>Sat., 10 am – 4 pm</i>	National Tour of Solar Buildings <i>Membership Meeting</i> <i>Members will assist on tours across Illinois</i>	<i>See Page 3</i> www.illinoissolar.org/tour
December 8 <i>10 am – 4 pm</i> <i>Sat., 10 am – 1 pm</i>	Chicago Center for Green Technology <i>Membership Meeting</i> <i>Nominations for Board of Directors</i>	www.illinoissolar.org
Sept. 8 <i>Sat., 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (solar)</i> <i>1:30pm – 4:30 pm (wind)</i> Oct. 20 <i>Sat., 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (solar)</i> <i>1:30pm – 4:30 pm (wind)</i> Nov. 3 <i>Sat., 9:30am – 12:30 pm (solar)</i> <i>1:30pm – 4:30 pm (wind)</i> Nov. 17 <i>Sat., 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (solar)</i> <i>1:30 pm – 4:30 pm (wind)</i>	ISEA Solar 101, Wind 101 Workshops <i>Highland, Illinois</i> <i>Chicago</i> <i>Rock Island, Illinois</i> <i>Carbondale, Illinois</i>	<i>See Page 7</i> www.illinoissolar.org <i>These sites are confirmed as of this printing.</i> <i>Online registration is available and strongly encouraged at</i> www.illinoissolar.org/workshops



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