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SOUTHERN TIER HOME & BUSINESS OWNERS GO SOLAR, 'DECLARE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE'

Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Steuben & Tompkins Counties Selected to Receive Time-Limited Solar Installation Discounts

(Binghamton, NY)— To celebrate Independence Day and promote new financial incentives for New Yorkers looking to go solar, the Southern Tier counties of Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, are launching a unique state-supported solar education and group purchasing program, Southern Tier Solar Works. Through Solar Works, residents and small business owners will be able to learn whether their homes and buildings are a fit for solar electricity, identify options for purchasing or leasing it, and find out how to move forward with affordable solar power. Solarize campaigns, like Southern Tier Solar Works, have more than doubled the use of residential solar in hundreds of New England towns, and are taking off in New York with support from Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's \$1 billion NY-SUN and Community Solar initiatives. Homeowners and small businesses can also enroll on line for a free solar site assessment from one of Solar Works' installer partners at southerntiersolarworks.org

Southern Tier Solar Works' summer campaign officially begins on July 2nd at noon with a media launch in front of the 11kw solar array at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, 183 Riverside Drive, next to Lourdes Hospital.

"Cost savings was a big component of my decision to go solar, in terms of locking in my electric costs for the next 25+ years. Even if rates increase, I'm immune. And once my system is paid off, I'll be paying just \$15 each month to connect to the power grid," said Terry Woodnorth of Endicott. "My solar installation is generating more energy than we use, so I'm getting a credit on nearly every bill. That's energy independence."

Terry's solar installation cost approximately \$25,000, but he was able to cut the cost to \$10,000 thanks to state and federal incentives and tax credits. "We also went solar to support economic development in Binghamton, an area that is struggling and has some of the worst unemployment numbers in the state," added Terry. "Anything I can do to support job creation and retention in our area is important. That's why I chose a well-established local installer, ETM Solar Works. It's my contribution to supporting the local economy."

The time-limited group purchasing discounts up to 15 percent are available through the early fall. The program benefits businesses and homeowners who choose to go solar, by bringing communities together with pre-qualified installation firms and high quality educational programming. In 2013, New York had the fourth highest average electricity prices in the United States; most new solar homeowners approach energy independence within a few months and see significant long-term savings on their utility bills.

“We are proactive when it comes to developing and implementing ways to control spending while supporting our local businesses and strengthening our infrastructure. Alternative energy, such as solar, will cause Newark Valley to be more financially independent while preserving our way of life. Securing our energy from the sun reduces our reliance on energy sources imported from overseas. This is a way to declare our energy independence,” said Jim Tornatore, Mayor of Newark Valley, NY.

Led by Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition and Catskill Mountainkeeper, the initiative is part of Mountainkeeper’s statewide RenewableNY initiative. The three-year effort is funded in the Hudson Valley and Southern Tier by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA). Residents of surrounding communities are welcome at Solarize outreach events which combine education, sociability and the opportunity to ask questions of the selected installer representatives.

“New York’s \$1 billion investment in solar is significant—and it will help thousands of home and small business owners go solar this year alone,” said Betta Broad, Energy & Climate Program Manager for Catskill Mountainkeeper. “A solar powered energy system isn’t the future. It’s now. And it’s for everyone—not just New Yorkers who care about the environment. It’s for families who want to save money on their utility bills and anyone who wants to declare their energy independence.”

“I had a solar system installed in 2010 at the Binghamton Tennis Center. At the time I felt like this was the right move and I’m happy to be a part of a growing group of people seeking out alternative energy. Our future is dependent upon us taking action to reduce our carbon footprint and seek alternative, renewable sources of energy,” said Michael Starke, owner and manager of the Binghamton Tennis Center.

This is STSW’s third solarize campaign. Since 2014, 97 families have gone solar, deploying 863kW. The goal is to double that number by the end of the summer. Taitem-ETM, Renovus Energy and Direct Energy Solar will continue as partner installers from the spring Solarize Southern Tier East campaign.

Community-led solarize campaigns are launching across the state this summer. In towns including Goshen, Warwick, Woodstock, Beacon and Rosendale, and county-wide campaigns in Broome, Tioga, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego solarize efforts are poised to

help homeowners and small businesses install solar easily and affordably by partnering with installers to offer a group-purchase discount.

New York's aggressive efforts to expand its clean energy economy are producing impressive results. The state now ranks third in the nation in new solar capacity during the first quarter of 2015. New York trailed only California and Nevada in Q1, according to the recently released U.S. Solar Market Insight Report compiled by GTM Research and the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA). The New York State Energy Plan, released on June 25, sets a goal of generating half of the state's power from clean, renewable sources by 2030.

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Southern Tier Solar Works is a partner in RenewableNY's effort to help New York State transition to a clean energy future. RenewableNY is a partnership including Sustainable Hudson Valley, Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition, Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins County and Catskill Mountainkeeper, and is supported by NYSERDA under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative. NY-Sun will invest up to \$1 billion in solar power through 2023 to expand solar installations statewide and help New York's solar industry become self-sustaining. Visit SouthernTierSolarWorks.org and RenewableNY.org to learn more.

This summer STSW will be appearing at farmers markets and festivals, at brown bag lunches hosted by large employers, and holding community meetings. Large employers interested in hosting a brown bag lunch to bring their employees the benefit of going solar, or community leaders who would like to work with us to set up a meeting in their town can contact STSW at 607-873-8992, or info@southerntiersolarworks.org

The first of these events have been scheduled as follows:

- July 2nd at Noon--Press Conference for Summer Campaign. Unitarian Universalist Church: 183 Riverside Dr, Binghamton, NY 13905
- July 3rd--First Friday in Binghamton, Atomic Toms, 196 State Street, Binghamton, 5-9 pm
- July 3rd--Tabling at the Town of Candor July 4th Celebration, Candor, NY, 4-close
- July 11th – Otsiningo Farmers Market, Otsiningo Park, 9-1.
- July 19th-- Tabling at the B-Mets Game, NYSEG Stadium, 211 Henry Street, Binghamton, NY 13901, United States, 1:05 p.m.
- July 22nd—Candor Community Meeting, Candor Town Hall, 101 Owego Rd, Candor, NY 13743, 6-8 p.m.
- July 27th—Hancock Community meeting, Bass Hancock House Hotel, 137 East Front Street, Hancock, NY 13783, United States, 6-8 p.m.
- July 28th--Community Meeting at the Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension, 7-9 pm

- July 31 – August 2, Speidie Fest, Otsiningo Park, Binghamton, 11-6 daily.
- August 8 – Newark Valley Parade and Tabling on the Green, 9-4.
- August 8 – Garlic Fest, ACA, 134 Front Street, Binghamton, 11-4