

## **SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN SOLAR GROUP BUY ANNOUNCES SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR 2018**

### **Dates Set for Free Public Information Sessions**

**Racine, WI** – The Southeast Wisconsin Solar Group Buy is pleased to announce it has chosen Arch Electric of Plymouth, WI, as its partner contractor for this year's program. This is the SWSGB's third year, and Arch also served as the contractor in 2017. The SWSGB will continue its relationship with the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps as well, having trainees assist with installations. All three organizations are excited to build on the momentum from the past two years.

Angie Domagalski, Solar Sales Manager with Arch Electric, said, "I'm pleased with the response last year, and I'm confident the momentum for consumers to transition to renewable energy is growing, thanks in part to group buys around the state like the SWSGB. Participants told us their decision was easier primarily due to the partnership between SWSGB and Arch Electric. They feel more confident knowing their installer has been evaluated by an unbiased third party."

In 2017, twenty one residences and three businesses in Racine and Kenosha Counties committed to producing their own clean renewable energy by participating in the group buy. These twenty four installations totaled 147 kilowatts, which made the SWSGB the third largest of five group buys in the state last year, according to RENEW Wisconsin. Initially offered in 2016 under the name SolaRacine, the program generated 18 residential installations totaling 80 kW the first year. The program's 2017 outcomes represent a 33% increase in installations and an 83% increase in kilowatts.

Added Tom Rutkowski, one of the organizers of the SWSGB, "On top of the signed contracts, over the two years of the program we have had an additional 164 households that had the free site assessment but for various reasons could not move forward by the program deadline. The increased participation in 2017 shows a growing level of interest for clean, renewable energy in Southeastern Wisconsin."

Bill Stone, owner of Brightonwoods Orchard in Burlington and the 2017 SWSGB participant with the largest array at 20kW, has been interested in installing solar since he built his home at the orchard in 1983. "It was appealing to look into alternative renewable energy sources at that time, however, wind and solar were very expensive with long payback periods. About 15 years later we again looked into alternative energy but again opted out for financial reasons," explained Stone. After learning about the SWSGB, he signed up for the program's free site assessment and met with Ms. Domagalski. After reviewing options for solar installation with her, Stone says "it became obvious that the best cost benefits would be achieved by utilizing one of our business meters as opposed to one of our residential meters. Combining federal tax credits, the SWSGB discount pricing, the Focus on Energy rebate, and business depreciation

brought our payback time down to around five years. Thus, our desire to exploit an alternative renewable energy source will be accomplished after thinking about the concept for over 30 years.”

“No matter if the installation is for a business or a residence, participants in the group buy benefit from the streamlined process and the financial savings made possible through the group buy format,” noted Rutkowski. “And the larger community benefits as well: over a ten-year period, the 227 total kilowatts installed through the SWSGB eliminate an amount of pollution equivalent to burning 249,593 gallons of gas or planting 53,419 trees. These installations are part of a larger movement that is collectively making a difference.”

Like Rutkowski, Domagalski points out that the financial savings were another motivating factor for SWSGB participants. “Solar is still an emerging market, so the cost to installers of acquiring new customers is still high. Group buys help relieve this cost for installers who pass the savings on to consumers. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

Homeowners and businesses can sign up for **free site assessments** now until July 27 through an online scheduler at [archelec.com/swsgb](http://archelec.com/swsgb).

**Free information sessions** for homeowners and business owners are being offered in several locations. All events are from 6:30pm – 8:00 pm:

**KENOSHA:** Wed., May 16, Festival Foods, 6000 31<sup>st</sup> Street, second floor conference room

**RACINE:** Wed., May 30, Eco-Justice Center, 7133 Michna Road

**BURLINGTON:** Thurs., June 14, Brightonwoods Orchard & Aepeltreow Winery & Distillery, 1072 288th Avenue; Featuring solar installation tour plus wine, cider & cheese sampling

Details are also available at <http://swsgb.solar/informational-meetings>.

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Photos of the Brightonwoods installation are available upon request.

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The Southeast Wisconsin Solar Group Buy is a volunteer-led program founded by Greening Greater Racine to reduce the cost and complexity of installing solar panels. By bringing together homeowners and businesses interested in making the transition to clean solar energy, SWSGB creates a “group buy” that generates efficiencies for our partner contractors who pass the savings on to participants. [www.swsgb.solar](http://www.swsgb.solar).

Arch Electric is one of most respected Solar Energy companies in Wisconsin. Its company leaders are active instructors, inspectors, and consultants to many of the leading energy

groups, including: Focus on Energy, Midwest Renewable Energy Association, North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners, Lakeshore Technical College, Sheboygan Sustainable Living Group, and many others. [www.archelec.com](http://www.archelec.com).

RENEW Wisconsin is a Madison-based organization that leads and accelerates the transformation to Wisconsin's renewable energy future through advocacy, education, and collaboration. [www.renewwisconsin.org](http://www.renewwisconsin.org)

The mission of the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps Our is to leverage resources among Great Lakes communities to train and educate disadvantaged populations for credentials that close the skills gap, improve water quality, build habitat, grow the legacy of the original Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and make the region more competitive in the global economy. [www.greatlakesccc.org](http://www.greatlakesccc.org).