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## **ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE SIGNED UP FOR SOLAR POWER IN BLAINE COUNTY**

*Solarize Blaine Provides Free Solar Assessments and Price Discounts*

**HAILEY, IDAHO** – April 20, 2016 – A local program providing discounted solar power installations to homes and businesses in Blaine County has quickly gained momentum, enrolling 100 participants throughout the Valley in just over a month. Program leaders believe this is just the beginning.

“The community is excited about solar,” said Katie Bray, Program Manager for Solarize Blaine. “People are taking advantage of free assessments through our program to see if solar power could work for their home, business, farm, or non-profit. Word is spreading quickly because neighbors are talking to neighbors and using their collective buying power to lower the costs for themselves and everyone else.”

Bray believes that the interest to adopt solar power comes down to the environment and economics, a sentiment shared by early signers Gerry Morrison and Julie Weston of the Indian Creek neighborhood in Hailey.

“We have to get off the bad stuff, and installing solar power is the way for our household to replace coal and other dirty fuels,” said Morrison. “We’re doing this for the community and for the greater world. I mean we live in Sun Valley, why not use the sun?”

Patrick Buchanan, a State Farm insurance agent based in Hailey, already has 10 solar panels generating 3kW of power on his building at 831 N Main Street. Buchanan isn’t surprised that solar is gathering momentum because he has experienced firsthand that it is a worthwhile business investment. “I’ll be here for 20 years, and with solar I’m getting 10-15 years of free power. That’s better than burning through money every month on my power bills.”

According to experts, solar has multiplying effects for all of Blaine County. “If all 100 people who have signed up for the program install solar, their price will drop by 20% and we could create 7 jobs for our community while also reducing our impact on the environment,” says Aimée Christensen of the Sun Valley Institute for Resilience, the nonprofit sponsoring the program. “Just with these first installations, we would save *thousands of tons of carbon dioxide* from entering the atmosphere, which is equivalent

to saving over one million gallons of gasoline from being burned or taking 100+ cars off the road in one year.”

How does the price drop by 20% for everyone going solar? The program negotiated a tiered pricing discount with the program’s residential solar installation companies Sagebrush Solar and Site-Based Energy. A similar pricing structure exists for commercial customers and nonprofits. “The more people who sign up, the more each participant saves. On average, there is big price break for every 10 residential systems that are installed in the county,” said Bray. “So, if we can help 40 residents go solar, then everyone will save \$3,500 on their system.”

Time is of the essence to join the Solarize Blaine program, however, as the discounts expire at the end of June. Community members are invited to hear more about solar energy, pricing, and installation at the **Solar 101 event being held in Hailey at the Wood River Sustainability Center on April 27<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30 PM.**

*To sign up for Solarize Blaine, visit [www.solarizeblaine.org](http://www.solarizeblaine.org) and click on the Free Solar Site Assessment button. Please contact Katie Bray for interview contacts with neighborhood volunteers, homeowners who have installed solar, local solar installers, and others supporting the Solarize program.*

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Solarize Blaine is a limited-time program that helps the people of Blaine County install solar power at a discounted price through a streamlined process. Based on the Solarize model used across the country and endorsed by the U.S. Department of Energy, Solarize Blaine leverages the power of group purchasing to reduce the cost of going solar and the tiered pricing structure increases savings as more people participate. Competitive financing is available through local banks. For more information, please visit: <http://www.solarizeblaine.org>



The Sun Valley Institute for Resilience advances policy leadership, public engagement and targeted investments to ensure economic prosperity, environmental protection and human wellbeing in its home community of Idaho’s Wood River Valley and beyond. Sun Valley leaders founded the Institute in the spring of 2015 to protect and enhance local quality of place for future generations of residents and visitors alike, and to serve as a resource for communities everywhere. From the original Native American inhabitants to the miners and ranchers of the valley’s early days, from the Union Pacific engineers who built the world’s first chairlift to those who challenge themselves in its mountains and rivers today, Sun Valley is about history and tradition, grit and perseverance, well-being and quality of life. The risks, assets and values of Sun Valley make it the perfect home for an institute dedicated to resilience. For more information, please visit: [www.sunvalleyinstitute.org](http://www.sunvalleyinstitute.org)