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**BLAINE COUNTY RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES CAN SAVE ON SOLAR WITH NEW PROGRAM,
FIRST OF ITS KIND IN IDAHO**

Free educational event will be held 6 – 7:30pm on March 31 at the Community Library

KETCHUM, IDAHO – March 9, 2016 – Solar energy is now available in Blaine County more cheaply and easily than ever before thanks to *Solarize Blaine*, launched by the Sun Valley Institute for Resilience. Modeled on similar initiatives around the country and the first in Idaho, *Solarize Blaine* is a limited-time program leveraging group purchasing to offer solar power at a discounted price and through a streamlined process. The Institute will host a free educational event for the public to learn more on March 31 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at the Community Library in Ketchum at 415 Spruce Avenue.

“*Solarize Blaine* is the chance for our community to capitalize on the incredible economic opportunity that solar now represents – for cost-savings as well as local job creation. Power bill savings start the day the system is installed, locking in low-cost clean energy for 25 years or more. It is a smart investment for homeowners and even more exciting for small businesses,” said Aimée Christensen, Executive Director of the Institute.

Christensen added, “Together we are building local momentum--neighbor by neighbor--to make solar more affordable than ever before. Solar prices have already come down 80% in the last five years and our program has negotiated prices that are as much as 20% below that, but time is of the essence. We are using a tiered pricing structure so that the price for everyone in Blaine County continues to drop as more people sign on to the program. To get the discounted pricing, contracts must be signed before June 30th of this year.”

“To participate, first visit www.solarizeblaine.org and fill out the Assessment form and then one of our pre-screened solar installers will call to schedule a free solar site assessment. Meanwhile, be sure to mark your calendar to join us on March 31 to learn everything you need to know before deciding to go solar,” said Katie Bray, the Institute’s Energy Program Manager who has led such programs around the country.

Solarize Blaine has arranged competitive financing through local banks. A financing expert and the selected solar installers will answer questions and go over the details of solar power including tax incentives, permitting, and local financing options at the March 31 event.

The Institute seeks to transform the Wood River Valley's grid into an efficient, sustainable, local and affordable energy system that keeps money in the Valley and provides the community with greater reliability, reduced environmental impacts, and local job creation. Solar is a down payment on that transformation and a prudent investment for residents and businesses right now.

To sign up for Solarize Blaine, visit www.solarizeblaine.org and click on the Get Started 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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About the Sun Valley Institute for Resilience

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



SolarizeBlaine About Solarize Blaine

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>