

VECAN

VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE
ACTION NETWORK

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May 2021 E-News

Dear Local Energy Leaders,

With spring well underway and vaccination rates increasing here in Vermont, we are excited by the opportunity this provides to meaningfully engage (perhaps in person for the first time in a while) our communities in climate action.

We hope the following information, including upcoming events, relevant news and action opportunities, will help support the important work you do to ensure Vermont does its part in combating the climate crisis.

EVENTS

- **Register for VECAN Lunch & Learn: A Sneak Peek at EAN's Annual Progress Report - May 17 at Noon** - Join local energy leaders from across the state to get a first glimpse of the latest "*Vermont Annual Progress Report on Energy, Equity, and the Economy*" from Jared Duval of the Energy Action Network (EAN). [Click here to register](#) and find more information below.
- **Cold Climate Heat Pumps: Do They Make Sense for You? - May 19 at 7:00 PM** - Join the Rochester Energy & Climate Action Committee for a presentation by Becca White of Efficiency Vermont to learn about how switching to a heat pump can make your home more efficient, reduce your household emissions, and save you money. Learn more below, including how to register.
- **Mow Electric! Campaign Events Coming Up - May 19 and May 27** - The Norwich Energy Committee and Rochester Energy & Climate Action Committee are hosting events this month as part of the [Mow Electric! Campaign](#), a grassroots initiative to grow the electric lawn care movement. See more event details below...
- **Reminder: Get Your Ticket for the Summit on the Future of Vermont - May 26 & 27** - Join Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) for a two-day virtual event to consider the Vermont Proposition - a framework of ideas for the future of the state, drawn from the input of thousands of Vermonters. [Find more information and register today here.](#)

NEWS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Host Your Own Climate Action Film Festival Encore Event** - SunCommon is offering the opportunity for energy committees and other organizations to host their own virtual screening of the Climate Action

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We are always looking for great stories of local action for our blog, social media and as helpful resources for our network. Please consider sending along anything you or others have accomplished or are working on by responding to this email or emailing rkuster@vnrc.org

About Us

VECAN is a network of statewide Vermont organizations helping communities across the Green Mountain State to reduce energy costs and climate impacts through conservation, increased energy efficiency and conversion to renewable energy sources.

VECAN's mission is to start, support and strengthen town energy committees.

Committee Changes?

Help us keep our network up to

Film Festival from now until June 30th. [Sign up to host a Climate Action Film Festival Encore event here](#) and find more details below.

date! Email changes in committee leadership or contact info to rkuster@vnrc.org

- **Try Out an E-bike at a Lending Library Near You!** - E-bikes and cargo bikes can significantly increase your ability to make biking a part of your life. Local Motion and partners have created opportunities for Vermonters across the state to try out an e-bike through their E-bike Lending Library Program. Want to try one? [Find your E-bike Lending Library here](#).
- **New Report Examines Vermont's Response to Climate Change - A new report** from Sola Vida and the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute examines what actions Vermont state government is currently taking to address climate change and where there is a clear need for greater investment. [Read more about the report here](#) and below.
- **Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) Announces New Tool for Job Seekers** - REV, Vermont's nonprofit renewable energy trade association, recently announced a new tool for job seekers looking for sustainable local employment. Their new [Clean Energy Resume Bank](#) connects people who want to join Vermont's energy revolution and climate economy with employers looking to hire. [Read more about this new tool here](#).
- **Youth Member of Vermont Climate Council Iris Hsiang Shares Why She Is Fighting for Climate Justice** - Iris Hsiang, a junior at Essex High School and newly appointed youth representative of the Vermont Climate Council, explains why she is taking action on climate change. "I feel obligated to use what privilege I have to obliterate it and use my position to uplift others. That is why I fight for the climate, because fighting for the climate is fighting for the people." [Read her powerful commentary in the Rutland Herald here](#).
- **Richmond Town Energy Coordinator Pens Commentary on Why Vermont Must Seize the Opportunity for Meaningful Climate Progress** - "Vermont has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in an energy future that will benefit all Vermonters and establish a solid foundation for our state's rural economy. We must not miss this chance," writes Jeff Forward, Richmond's Town Energy Coordinator and chair and founding member of the Richmond Climate Action Committee. [Read his full commentary in VTDigger here](#).
- **Grant Opportunity to Offset High Energy Costs in Rural Areas** - The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking applications for grants to offset high energy costs in rural areas where local conditions cause energy costs to exceed 275 percent of the national average. [Learn more about the grant program here](#) and below.
- **Department of Energy (DOE) Launches Initiatives to Accelerate Solar Deployment in Underserved Communities** - Earlier this month, the DOE announced a slate of new efforts, including \$15.5 million in new funding, to support solar energy deployment in underserved communities and build a diverse, skilled workforce. [Read more about this initiative here](#).

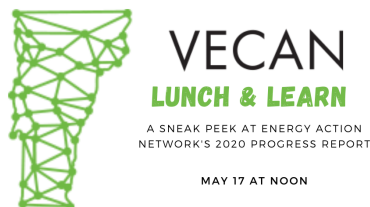
As always, thanks for all that you do.

Best,

Bekah Kuster, Community Energy Coordinator, AmeriCorps Member, VECAN
802-223-2328 ext. 116 - rkuster@vnrc.org

EVENTS

A Sneak Peek at EAN's 2020 Annual Progress Report - May 17 at Noon



Join local energy leaders from around the state to get a sneak preview of the latest "*Vermont Annual Progress Report on Energy, Equity, and the Economy*" from Jared Duval, executive director of the Energy Action Network. Every year, he and his team crunch the numbers to provide the most up-to-date analysis possible on where Vermont stands on reducing our

greenhouse gas emissions. We'll also discuss the implications of this data on future climate policy, including what might emerge from the work of the Vermont Climate Council. There will be ample time for questions! We hope you can join us...

[Register to attend here!](#)

P.S. Even if you aren't able to attend the event live, please register anyway to make sure you receive the recording and follow-up email!

Cold Climate Heat Pumps: Do They Make Sense for You? - May 19 at 7:00 PM

Heat pumps for both space and water heating can play a big role in your home – making it more efficient, reducing your household emissions, and saving you money.

Join the Rochester Energy & Climate Action Committee Wednesday, May 19th at 7 PM for a presentation by Becca White, Community Engagement Manager with Efficiency Vermont.



Learn about the latest in heat pump technologies, the relative cost and savings compared to other fuel sources and systems, and all the financial incentives available. There will be plenty of time for Q&A.

Email the library at rochesterpubliclibraryVT@gmail.com to preregister

for this event. A Zoom link will be sent to you.

Mow Electric! Campaign Events

The [Mow Electric! Campaign](#) is underway! Energy committees across the state are taking part in the campaign by hosting educational events for those interested in switching to electric lawn care equipment. [Read more about the campaign in this *Seven Days* article.](#)

Find two upcoming events (virtual and in-person) that you or others you know might be interested in:

Electrify Everything: Cut (Emissions From) Your Lawn - May 19 at 7 PM



Running a fossil-fuel-powered lawnmower for an hour emits the same amount as driving a car for 300 miles (or driving 6 to 8 cars for an hour). Multiply that by 20 times each year, and it adds up. But that's not the only way to cut your lawn!

The Norwich Energy Committee is hosting an online presentation Wednesday, May 19, at 7 pm to help you

learn how to cut your grass AND cut your emissions. Hear from Steve Wisbaum of the

Vermont-based *Mow Electric!* Campaign and Lynnwood Andrews of the Norwich Conservation Commission. They'll cover the basics of purchasing electric lawn equipment or finding lawn services that use electric equipment and ways to reduce your mowing area and frequency and still maintain your landscape.

[Click here to join the Zoom meeting.](#)

Commercial Demonstration Day - May 27 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Join the Rochester Energy & Climate Action Committee for an electric lawn care demo event. Commercial mowing contractors and businesses with large mowing needs can stop by Peavine Drive (the ballfields), in Rochester anytime between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM to drive the equipment, learn about available rebates, and about how economical the

switch to electricity would be for your business. Plus, enjoy a FREE lunch (hot dogs, chips, & a beverage)!

Mow Electric! Campaign Founder, Steven Wisbaum, says "This is probably the first time (ever!) that the three existing commercial E-mowers will be available for demos in one place in Vermont." Battery technology has now dramatically increased run time such that this equipment is ready for prime time for commercial mowing contractors and businesses with large mowing needs.

[Click here to view the event flyer for more information.](#)

NEWS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Host Your Own Climate Action Film Festival Encore Event Now Until June 30



In March of this year, SunCommon hosted its second annual Climate Action Film Festival (CAFF), which brings together activists, filmmakers, and communities to witness and celebrate stories of climate action. The virtual festival featured both short and feature length films, as well as panel discussions and breakout conversations with filmmakers, climate

activists, and organizations committed to facing the climate crisis head-on.

In celebration of Earth Day, SunCommon brought back some of their favorite films from this year's CAFF as part of their Encore Event series. They are now offering the opportunity for energy committees and other organizations to host their own screening of the Climate Action Film Festival from now until June 30th!

SunCommon has put together an event guide complete with discussion questions to help local community groups and climate organizations (or anyone else) host their own online event to inspire their people to act on climate.

[Sign up to host a Climate Action Film Festival Encore event here.](#)

Your Chance to Borrow an E-bike or Cargo E-bike!

Local Motion's E-bike Lending Library program allows free short-term loans of several different types of e-bikes as a way for people to see how an e-bike fits in with their daily routes and commutes.

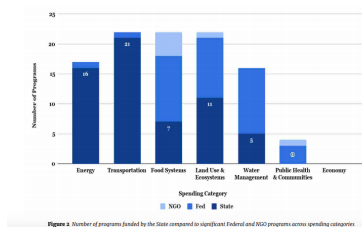


Local Motion's [Traveling E-bike Lending Library](#) will be in several locations this spring and summer, thanks to towns, libraries, and energy committees across Vermont who serve as their hosts. If you live in the Upper Valley, you can also check out the [Upper Valley Lending Library](#), which travels around towns in the region.

There are also several permanent lending libraries around the state, including the Burlington Lending Library located at their Trailside Center, the Brattleboro Satellite Lending Library hosted by the Brooks Memorial Library, and the Rutland Satellite Lending Library hosted by the Rutland Recreation Department.

Interested in trying out an e-bike? [Find your E-bike Lending Library here and reserve your loan period today.](#)

New Report Examines Vermont's Response to Climate Change



Last summer, SolaVida, a Vermont-based non-profit, collaborated with the University of New Hampshire Sustainability Institute to compile an inventory of Vermont's publicly funded programs that address clean energy and climate change. The resulting report, [“The Cost of Climate Change In Vermont: Part One – Spending Inventory”](#) establishes the foundation for a

full analysis that would organize and document the spending that underpins the state's projects and programs.

Dan Quinlan, founder of the SolaVida that conducted the work, says that “Creating a view of activity underway is essential to any state government that is trying to develop a cohesive and comprehensive plan for moving to a clean energy economy and for addressing climate change.”

Findings from the report indicate areas where there is a clear need for increased attention from policymakers, including public health, water management, and the vulnerability of industries that will be drastically impacted by climate change.

[Read the full report here.](#)

USDA Grant Opportunity to Offset High Energy Costs in Rural Areas



The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), announced the availability of up to \$10 million in competitive grants to assist communities with extremely high energy costs.

The grant funds may be used to acquire, construct, or improve energy generation, transmission, or

distribution facilities serving communities where the average annual residential expenditure for home energy exceeds 275% of the national average. Eligible projects also include on-grid and off-grid renewable energy projects and the implementation of energy efficiency and energy conservation projects for eligible communities.

The application deadline is July 6, 2021.

[Learn more about the program here.](#)



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