This bulb’s for you
Watch your mailbox for a free, energy-efficient LED bulb from Chelan County PUD. It’s our way of thanking you for your continued support of solar, wind and small-hydro power in Chelan County.

Go Lightly
Sign up for our Lightly e-newsletter and receive monthly updates on money-saving rebates and energy efficiency opportunities through Chelan PUD. To sign up, visit chelanpud.org (click on “Sign up for our newsletters” on the home page) or send an email to conservation@chelanpud.org.
Solar gaining ground — and rooftops — in Chelan County

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The new producers, all with fixed solar systems on both rooftops and poles, added 38 kilowatts of capacity. They are:

- Icicle River Middle School Community Solar Project, Leavenworth
- Dirk Horton and Mickey Fleming, Wenatchee
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Two applications to the SNAP program are pending from individuals. The cities of Leavenworth and Chelan are planning solar installations, too.

Solar is growing in the county largely due to generous state-sponsored incentives. Producers using solar modules and inverters manufactured in Washington are eligible for the highest payouts available through the state’s renewable energy program. Taking advantage of the state incentives, in addition to SNAP, brings a faster return on investment.

The state payments come from the state’s utility tax fund; SNAP payments come from PUD customers interested in renewable energy. Customers contributed $21,555 this past year, for payments come from PUD customers interested in renewable energy.

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A tale of two cities

Leavenworth

A 20-kilowatt solar system has been installed on the roof of the wastewater treatment plant at Leavenworth and is set to be connected to the PUD’s grid in May. Joel Walinski, city administrator, said Leavenworth received a state Department of Commerce solar energy incentive grant for $299,726 for the wastewater plant installation and for solar heaters at the city pool. The goal is to reduce energy costs by using solar power, he said.

Leavenworth also received a $461,964 Department of Commerce energy efficiency grant to replace solar blankets at the pool and upgrade the HVAC systems at City Hall and the Fest Halle. The city contributed $91,000 toward the upgrade, and Chelan PUD is providing additional funding.

Chelan

A 23-kilowatt solar installation will soon decorate the roofs of the golf cart sheds at the Lake Chelan Municipal Golf Course.

Solar construction is part of an energy-efficiency project that includes installing LED street lights and upgrading lighting and HVAC systems at city buildings, Parks Director Charles Sablan said.

State Department of Commerce grant funding is covering most of the costs. The solar project total is $236,000; the city is contributing $30,000. The energy efficiency portion totals $750,000; the city is picking up $200,000 of the cost. Chelan PUD is providing $133,892 through its ResourceSmart program.

Sablan said the city also is reactivating pumps that draw water from the lake and creating an irrigation system separate from its potable water system to irrigate parks. He said the city will save $12,000 to $15,000 a year by not using filtered, treated water from its potable system for irrigation.

All the projects should be complete by Nov. 1, Sablan said.

A great idea that’s meeting great expectations

It was about a year ago that members of Faith Lutheran Church in Leavenworth pitched this idea to the community: Let’s build a solar project at Icicle River Middle School that will generate electricity, a profit for the investors – and do something good for the planet.

The group had their investors and construction money within days and on June 27, the Icicle River Middle School Community Solar Project was connected to Chelan County PUD’s electrical grid.

Project consultant Ellen Lamiman said the 19-kilowatt system is meeting production expectations. Lamiman had put the project on a fast track to take advantage of summer sun. But even this past winter, in November through January, solar generation was higher than the expected average, she said.

“Every year the months will be different, but the yearly average should be around 22,000 kilowatt hours,” she explained in an email.

Payments of $1.08 per kilowatt hour generated are available to community solar investors through the state’s Renewable Energy System Cost Recovery Program. The program is designed to spur manufacturing of solar modules and inverters in Washington and to help make renewable energy systems affordable. The payments come from state utility taxes — in this case, those collected by Chelan PUD — and must be made to a local entity.

Revenues from generation through the SNAP program will go to Icicle River Middle School, where the solar modules are located, and not to project investors.

Production at the site can be monitored online at home.solarlog-web.net/2263.html.

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