



# The RE-Source

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ABOUT RENEWABLE ENERGY & CONSERVATION | SPRING 2016

DENISE ATHAS, MCE BOARD MEMBER  
AND MAYOR PRO TEM OF NOVATO



## Welcome From the Board

I am very pleased as a member of MCE's Board of Directors and the Mayor Pro Tem of Novato, to welcome you to the third issue of the RE-Source, MCE's quarterly newsletter. As a Real Estate professional for 27 years, it has been my calling to help people make homes for themselves in our community, so I have come to know that home is all about the interdependent relationships we foster and forge where we live and work.

In this issue of the RE-Source, we'll explore some of those local relationships. We'll learn about the innovative renewable energy projects being built right here in our community, and about the local jobs and other benefits these efforts will bring. Novato is excited to see that two of these projects will be coming online soon at the former Cooley Quarry site and at the Buck Institute.

You'll read about the grand opening of the Barbara George Learning Center at MCE, where people of all ages and interests can learn about energy and interactively engage with ways to use energy efficiently and sustainably.

After you put down this issue, I hope you'll consider paying a visit to the featured Deep Green Champion business, Wild Birds Unlimited. They foster customer engagement with our fine, feathered friends who, I might add, have the best views of the new solar construction.

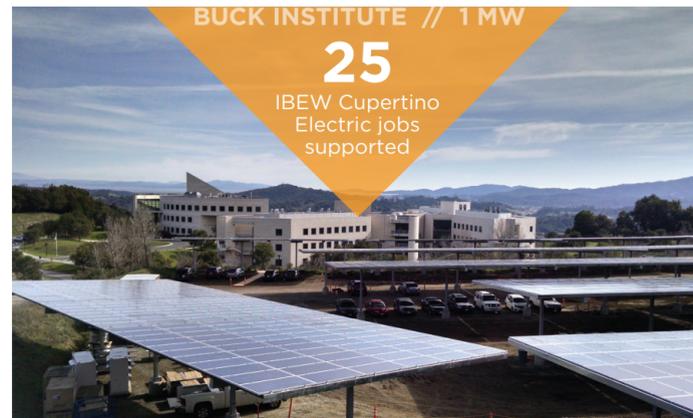
Warm regards,

*Denise Athas*

# Local Solar Energy Projects & Jobs Brighten Our Future



**11-17**  
jobs supported  
COOLEY QUARRY // 1.5 MW



BUCK INSTITUTE // 1 MW  
**25**  
IBEW Cupertino  
Electric jobs supported



**341**  
jobs supported &  
50% local hire (Richmond)  
MCE SOLAR ONE // 10.5 MW



PHOTOS (LEFT TO RIGHT): Novato Cooley Quarry aerial view; cows grazing at the Cooley Quarry; Buck Institute solar shade structure; Richmond Solar One rendering; Richmond Solar One rendering – western view

## LOCAL ENERGY NEWS

### Flipping the Switch on Local Solar Projects

MCE is excited to announce that two of our solar projects will be coming online to start serving customers in the next few months. That means more of the energy purchased from our customers will be generated from renewable projects located right in our service area.

Developing local renewable projects produces several environmental and economic benefits. Keeping renewable energy projects local means the jobs that these projects support are filled by local construction and maintenance workers. Oftentimes, these projects are developed on land that cannot be used for many purposes, such as brownfield sites and parking lots, which creates meaningful environmental improvement in areas that would otherwise not have much utility.

#### 1.5 MEGAWATTS OF SOLAR AT NOVATO COOLEY QUARRY

The former Cooley Quarry site in Novato is one of the few places where you can catch a glimpse of cows grazing alongside a ground mounted solar farm. With the help of Danlin Solar and REP Energy – both based in San Rafael – as well as the Novato Cooley Quarry, MCE will be flipping the switch on this new community solar farm this summer. The project was developed under MCE's Feed-In Tariff, a standard offer contract for local renewable projects. Enough energy will be generated at the 11.5 acre site to power between 500 and 600 homes per year. Electricity from the Cooley Quarry solar project will be purchased by customers of our new Local Sol energy service, which guarantees locally-produced, 100% solar energy at a fixed rate for 20 years. With half of our Founding



#### INTERESTED IN CHOOSING 100% COMMUNITY SOLAR FROM NOVATO'S COOLEY QUARRY FOR YOUR ENERGY NEEDS?

MCE's local solar projects mean that *anyone* in our service area – whether they are a resident or business owner, homeowner or renter – can switch their monthly electricity service to 100% locally-produced solar energy. We call it Local Sol. The energy for Local Sol is produced at the Cooley Quarry in Novato, allowing anyone in our service area to harness the power of the sun by simply enrolling their electricity account (you aren't required to install solar panels on your roof!). To take advantage of local solar energy, secure one of the 200 Founding Customers spots (less than 100 were remaining at time of press) at: [mceCleanEnergy.org/100-local-solar](http://mceCleanEnergy.org/100-local-solar) or contact us at: [info@mceCleanEnergy.org](mailto:info@mceCleanEnergy.org) or 1 (888) 632-3674.

Customer spots already claimed, it's clear that our members are as thrilled to have the choice of 100% local solar energy as we are!

#### 1 MEGAWATT SOLAR COVERED PARKING STRUCTURE AT THE BUCK INSTITUTE

The Buck Institute in Novato now houses a new solar carport shade structure! The Institute is the nation's first independent research facility focused solely on understanding the connection between aging and chronic disease. The solar project is expected to come online in April 2016 and will provide enough power for up to 300 homes per year. Construction on the project supported 25 jobs, which were provided by Cupertino Electric, an IBEW 1245 Signatory contractor. Celebrate this local solar project with us at a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Details about this event can be found at: [mceCleanEnergy.org/meeting/Buck](http://mceCleanEnergy.org/meeting/Buck).

#### NEXT UP ... THE SECOND LARGEST SOLAR PROJECT IN THE BAY AREA!

We have also recently begun work on what will be the first MCE-owned renewable project, MCE Solar One. This 10.5 MW ground mounted solar farm in Richmond will be the largest publicly owned solar project in the Bay Area. The 49-acre project constructed on a Chevron Richmond Refinery brownfield site will support 341 jobs and will generate enough power for 3,400 homes

### A Mega ... What?

Watts measure the rate that electricity is being used at a specific moment. For example, when a 15-watt LED light bulb is turned on, it draws 15 watts of electricity at any moment. One megawatt (MW) is equivalent to one million watts. Megawatts are used to measure the output of a power plant.

per year. We have partnered with RichmondBUILD to train and hire its skilled graduates as employees for the project.

#### OUR CUSTOMERS ARE GREENING THEIR COMMUNITIES

Customers that choose Deep Green as their energy service pay a premium of 1¢ per kWh (or approximately \$5 per month for the average household) to have 100% of their electricity sourced from renewable wind and solar. In turn, half of this premium is allocated towards the pre-development costs of renewable energy projects located within our member communities, such as MCE Solar One. As more residents and businesses choose to purchase Deep Green 100% renewable energy, more renewable energy projects will be built throughout our member communities. To enroll in Deep Green and contribute to local renewable project development, visit: [mceCleanEnergy.org/DG-enroll](http://mceCleanEnergy.org/DG-enroll). ■

## WATTS HAPPENING: ENERGY EFFICIENCY NEWS

### Fly Down to the Barbara George Learning Center

Our wings are flapping with excitement to announce the grand opening of the Barbara George Learning Center, a family-friendly, interactive space to learn and engage in energy-related activities and exhibits. We invite you to explore the new hands-on displays and learn about how simple energy efficiency improvements can significantly enhance the comfort of your home or business.

Aptly named after Barbara George, a beloved and fierce advocate of MCE from the very beginning, this room was inspired by her environmental activism and passion for energy efficiency and renewables.

Each year the Learning Center will explore a different theme – ranging from lighting and electric vehicles to sustainable agricultural practices and transportation. The room's inaugural theme is lighting. Exhibits include a solar pathfinder, light bike, daylighting model, and an LED display created by students at the Marin School of Environmental Leadership – an innovative project-based school within Terra Linda High School. To kick it all off, we will be hosting a Dedication and Grand Opening Celebration on Earth Day with outdoor activities, guest speakers, exhibitors, and food trucks.

Schools and youth groups that are interested in educational opportunities or tours at the Learning Center (see this issue's Get Involved section) can reach out to us at [learningcenter@mceCleanEnergy.org](mailto:learningcenter@mceCleanEnergy.org) or (415) 464-6033. ■



### Earth Day Grand Opening Celebration!

**When:** Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10 am – 2 pm

**Where:** MCE, 1125 Tamalpais Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901

**RSVP:** Register your attendance at [earthdaymce.eventbrite.com](http://earthdaymce.eventbrite.com) for a chance to win a gift certificate to a Deep Green Champion business.

For additional celebration details – including a schedule of guest speakers, exhibitors, activities, and food, please visit: [mceCleanEnergy.org/learning-center](http://mceCleanEnergy.org/learning-center)



## Novato

Believe it or not, summer is zipping just around the corner. So get ready for dripping ice cream cones, sprays of water from lake-soaked dogs, and sandy-paged paperbacks. And be sure to mark your calendars for the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Novato Festival of Art, Wine and Music on June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>!



During this festival, the picturesque North Bay town of Novato hosts tens of thousands of people for two days of amazing festivities. This Novato Chamber of Commerce event is a free multi-generational gathering that incorporates all of the best parts of living in Northern California. Featuring a blend of unique handcrafted art, regional and imported wines, award-winning micro brews, Americana and gourmet foods, and first-rate live music from 23 performers on two stages, this Festival is the place to be in June.



Produced in collaboration with local volunteers and sponsors, the half-mile street festival stretches along Historic Downtown Novato's Grant Avenue between Redwood Boulevard and 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

Children get the chance to explore rides, arts, and games, meet the heroes of Novato Police and Fire Department, and experience the petting zoo. Games and attractions are not only for children – unique art and displays developed by local vendors and nonprofits showcase the best that Novato and its surrounding countryside has to offer.

For the last decade its planners have made great strides towards greening the festival, including recycling efforts, water reclamation and greywater systems, and bike valet parking. So get outside, bask in the sunshine, and have some fun along the streets of one of MCE's member communities! ■



## MEET A DEEP GREEN CHAMPION

### Wild Birds Unlimited

104 Vintage Way Ste. A7, Novato, CA 94945  
 Mon - Sat: 10am - 6pm & Sun: 11am - 5pm  
[wbu.com/marin](http://wbu.com/marin)



**THE INSPIRATION:** You might say that Jack Gedney's journey to co-managing Wild Birds Unlimited started with the birdfeeders his dad had peppered around their backyard. When Jack's parents opened the doors in 2010, Novato's Wild Birds Unlimited became the North Bay's first full service store for wild bird supplies. With a mission to promote the enjoyment of wild birds and help attract them to customers' backyards, Jack and his longtime colleague, Don Kimball, find that their shop draws both seasoned naturalists as well as those new to the birding world.

**THE COMMUNITY:** Oftentimes, Jack sees his customers' bird interests flourish into meaningful connections with nature and even Audubon Society memberships. "People enjoy it. It's an inherently low environmental impact activity and

it helps people feel one with nature. It's very peaceful, restful and meditative. Birdwatchers visit us regularly. WBU is the only binocular specialty shop in the Bay Area." The joy and deep commitment to birds that their customers feel is truly palpable when you visit the store!

**THE CHAMPIONS:** Recognizing the alignment between WBU's values and the environmental potency of being a Deep Green Champion, Jack affirms, "there is a natural overlap with people who love birds, green business programs, and environmental stewardship." The store has also completed energy efficiency upgrades to reduce their consumption and lower their bills (fittingly, MCE's energy efficiency mascot is an owl!). "We choose to participate in MCE's Deep Green 100% renewable energy service and the Bay Area Green Business Program because we believe that our business practices should reflect and support our mission of promoting appreciation of the natural world." They have claimed one of the 200 spots on the Local Sol founding members waitlist and are anxiously awaiting the launch of the 100% local solar energy service. As Jack attests, "I love the fact that Local Sol will support the solar power generated at the old Cooley Quarry site right here in Novato. It's very important to me." ■



Don (left) with Jack (right) of WBU of Marin



## Greg Brehm, Director of Power Resources

### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MCE IN THREE WORDS?

Pragmatic, non-conformist, and transformational.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I enjoy working with the amazing and dedicated MCE staff, and seeing the tangible progress we make every day towards achieving our mission. It's very satisfying to look back over the past several years and see the superhighway (no longer a trail) we have all built for transforming the energy "business as usual" sector, and seeing more and more CCAs forming and jumping on the on-ramp.

**WHO INSPIRES YOU?** Besides Dawn, our CEO, and the entire MCE staff ... Bessie Anderson Stanley, who authored a quote defining success that has been mis-attributed to both Robert Louis Stevenson and Ralph Waldo Emerson over the years: "To laugh often and love much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded." I see this as a philosophy to live my life by, and what we do at MCE.

### IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A DESERTED ISLAND, WHAT THREE THINGS WOULD YOU HAVE AND WHY?

1) Something sharp, pointy, and unbreakable – could come in handy for lots of uses, like food, building a shelter or boat, self-defense against anything bigger or hungrier than I. 2) Loads of (recycled) plastic sheeting – for collecting and distilling drinking water, waterproofing my shelter, building an inflatable raft and sail, or maybe a hot tub. 3) My imagination – to come up with anything else I might need.

**WHAT DOES "GOING GREEN" MEAN TO YOU?** See my last response ... but seriously, I think going green means reducing or eliminating the consumption of non-renewable resources and being the best possible steward of the planet we share with every other creature living on it. They were here first and we are only guests, best to not leave the place a mess.

**WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?** My superpowers are tenacity and the ability to see the 10,000 foot, big picture view. I am a private pilot after all! ■

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- \* **GRAND OPENING OF MCE'S BARBARA GEORGE LEARNING CENTER**  
Apr 22 | San Rafael
- \* **STEM FESTIVAL**  
Apr 23 | Sausalito
- \* **LAFAYETTE EARTH DAY FESTIVAL**  
Apr 24 | Lafayette
- \* **BUCK INSTITUTE SOLAR PROJECT RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY**  
May 12 | Novato

Visit [mceCleanEnergy.org/meetings](http://mceCleanEnergy.org/meetings) for details and a full calendar of events.

### GET INVOLVED

## School Opportunities at MCE's Learning Center!

Teachers and administrators, we invite you to consider MCE's brand new, youth-friendly Barbara George Learning Center as an extension of *your classroom* (see this issue's Watts Happening article). It's your go to spot for a wealth of information on renewable energy and energy conservation.

Consider taking advantage of the educational opportunities at the Learning Center by contacting: [learningcenter@mceCleanEnergy.org](mailto:learningcenter@mceCleanEnergy.org) or (415) 464-6033. Information about the Barbara George Learning Center can be found at: [mceCleanEnergy.org/learning-center](http://mceCleanEnergy.org/learning-center)



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Stay in touch: @mceCleanEnergy



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