

FEBRUARY 8, 2016


[-edition](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Search

☐ Search our Site

☐ Search our Network

[HOME](#)
[NEWS](#)
[SPORTS](#)
[OBITUARIES](#)
[LIFESTYLE](#)
[CLASSIFIEDS](#)
[SUBSCRIBE](#)
[CT STORE](#)
[PIX & FLIX](#)
[NIE](#)
[CONTESTS](#)
[HELP](#)
You are here: [Home](#) - [News](#) - Co-op puts a shine on solar

Co-op puts a shine on solar

Filed on January 29, 2016 by [Jon Wysochanski](#)
[13 Comments](#)

Like

Share

189

Tweet

G+1

4

OBERLIN — Residents in Oberlin are forming the county's first solar energy cooperative in an effort to pool resources and knowledge while getting discounts on installation costs for solar energy systems.

The Oberlin People's Energy Cooperative and Ohio Solar United Neighborhoods (OH SUN), a project of the Community Power Network, are looking for members to join the Lorain County Solar Co-op.

An informational meeting on the co-op will be 6:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Community Room of the Oberlin Public Library, 65 S. Main St.

The Community Power Network is a grassroots group of local, state and national organizations working to build and promote locally based renewable energy projects and policies.



Mary and Carl McDaniel stand in prairie grass in the backyard of their solar-powered home on East College Street in Oberlin on Thursday. STEVE MANHEIM / CHRONICLE

It has helped more than 1,000 homeowners in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia go solar through community-based solar co-ops.

Luke Sulfridge, OH SUN program director, said when residents form co-ops, they are usually able to save about 20 percent on installation costs which can range from \$8,000 to \$15,000 to install 3-kilowatt to 5-kilowatt systems on the average home.

Sulfridge said an uncovered, southern-facing home is the most ideal set up for a solar system, although there are options for any home.

Energy co-ops help people decide what kind of solar power system will work best for their home, while also undertaking the competitive bidding process for the group of residents to keep installation costs low.

Co-ops also help people navigate myriad bureaucratic hurdles each community might have when it comes to building or installing solar energy systems.

"We work with co-op members and partner with people to make informed decisions," Sulfridge said.

Sulfridge said many solar systems will generate more than half the power a home needs, although some homeowners actually design homes specifically to accommodate a solar energy system, or take other steps to reduce consumption, which allows them to rely on solar energy for 100 percent of their energy needs.

Carl McDaniel, chair of the Oberlin People's Energy Cooperative, is one of the people whose home is powered entirely by solar energy.



COPS AND COURTS

2 arrested after man shot early Sunday
February 8, 2016

ELYRIA — Arrests have been made after a Sunday
[Read More...](#)

- [Wellington woman injured in Pitts Road crash Sunday](#)
- [BREAKING: Elyria police investigating 3rd Street shooting](#)
- [North Ridgeville crash probe continues](#)
- [Police: Woman's identity stolen; cell phones bought](#)
- [Police organizations squabble over proposed use-of-force guidelines](#)

[More...](#)


[DELINQUENT REAL ESTATE TAX NOTICE](#)

McDaniel's home actually produces more energy than is used on an annual basis with the surplus energy being pumped back into the power grid.

Advertise With Us

Subscribe

Contact Us

Job Openings

Terms of Use

FAQs

Privacy Policy

E-Edition

Follow us on Twitter

Like us on Facebook

RSS Feed

Purchase Photos

Laminations

McDaniel, a 1964 Oberlin College graduate and a biology professor, and his wife, Mary, a retired teacher, completed construction in 2008 on the solar-powered home known as Trail Magic.

RETURN TO TOP OF PAGE

COPYRIGHT (C) LORAIN COUNTY PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO. | TERMS OF USE

McDaniel said climate change is real and backed up by scientific evidence, despite what some politicians might say to the contrary. More people need to move away from fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions if future generations want a planet to live on, he said.

Compared to the average two-person home, Trail Magic uses 70 percent less electricity, 95 percent less electricity for lighting, 80 percent less indoor water and 70 percent less hot water. About 50 percent of the energy needed to heat Trail Magic comes from solar energy, with the rest coming from on site wood.

Of course, McDaniel said along with generating solar power, one must also take other actions to conserve power like turning off lights, using less water and properly insulating the home.

McDaniel said his home uses about 3,000 kilowatt hours annually for all energy needs, and if they used solar entirely for heating needs, that number would jump to about 4,000.

The average home in Oberlin uses about 9,000 hours, he said, which doesn't account for heating, air conditioning or hot water.

But McDaniel said his home is not what is important: getting people involved in solar energy co-ops is. He said people need to know solar energy works, and it is possible to generate solar power in cloudy Ohio.

McDaniel said partnering with OH SUN is exciting because the group will come to Lorain County with all the knowledge about solar energy and installation processes. This will make it very easy for residents throughout the county to get on board with solar energy while networking with others through the co-op.

"The only thing there is to say is that it works in northern Ohio," McDaniel said. "You can run your house on solar energy."



Standard solar panels on the roof face south at Mary and Carl McDaniel's home in Oberlin on Thurs. Jan. 28. STEVE MANHEIM/CHRONICLE

Purchase Photo



Mary and Carl McDaniel stand in prairie grass in the back yard of their solar-powered home on East College Street in Oberlin on Thursday, Jan. 28. Lorain County residents are forming the Ob ...

Purchase Photo



Carl McDaniel of Oberlin shows the solar power inverter at his home on Thursday, Jan. 28. The inverter converts DC to AC power. STEVE MANHEIM/CHRONICLE

Purchase Photo



Mary and Carl McDaniel stand in prairie grass in the back yard of their solar-powered home on East College Street in Oberlin on Thursday, Jan. 28. Lorain County residents are forming the Ob ...

Purchase Photo

This story has been edited to reflect the following correction: The systems installed are 3- to 5-kilowatt systems. The amount stated was incorrect.

Related Posts

- Reign of 'king coal' appears near an end as Appalachia reels
- Presidential candidates differ sharply on energy, climate change
- Obama orders steeper greenhouse gas cuts for power plants
- Hillary touts renewable energy in Iowa appearance



About Jon Wysochanski
Jon Wysochanski is a reporter for the Chronicle-Telegram covering Avon, Avon Lake, Sheffield Village and Sheffield Lake. He can be reached at 329-7123 or JWysochanski@chroniclet.com. Follow him on [Twitter](#).

Like

Share

189

Tweet

G+1

4

Filed Under:

[News](#), [Top Stories](#)

Tagged With:

[Carl McDaniel](#), [Community Power NEtwork](#), [Lorain CountySolar-Co-op](#), [oberlin](#), [Oberlin People's Energy Cooperative](#), [Ohio Solar United Neighborhoods](#)

Read More Top Stories

- [Restaurants gear up for Mardi Gras](#)
- [Wellington woman injured in Pitts Road crash Sunday](#)
- [BREAKING: Elyria police investigating 3rd Street shooting](#)
- [Wood from old barns gets second life](#)

LOAD COMMENTS