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Going solar together

Neighbors in Rappahannock County are forming a solar co-op to leverage their group buying power to go solar together and obtain a discount on the installation price for their systems. The Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection (RLEP) and VA SUN, the co-op's sponsors, are hosting a second informational meeting at 2 p.m. June 14 at the Theatre at Washington (291 Gay St.) to further inform the community about the process.

"The group discount on materials and installation costs offsets Virginia's lackluster benefits for going solar," said Rick Kohler, president of RLEP. "The discount averages as much as 20 percent. Combined with the 30-percent federal tax credit and net metering by Rappahannock Electric, we can generate substantial savings for Rappahannock citizens. VA SUN has created these co-ops in other areas of Virginia with great success, and we look forward to Rappahannock County becoming a solar leader in the Commonwealth. VA SUN is almost ready to launch, so join now!"

Virginia Solar United Neighborhoods (VA SUN) is a nonprofit that helps make solar more affordable and accessible. It has worked with more than 600 solar co-op members in Virginia, already saving Virginia residents nearly \$400,000 in the past year. Residents interested in joining the co-op can already sign up online at vasun.org/solarize-virginia/rappahannock-solar-co-op.

Joining the co-op is not a commitment to purchase panels. Once the group is large enough, VA SUN will help the co-op solicit competitive bids from area solar installers and select a single company to complete all of the installations. Co-op members will then have the option to purchase panels based upon the installer's offer individually.

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