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Updated: Wednesday, May 6 2015, 06:51 PM EDT

WHEELING, W.Va. -- Oil and gas isn't the only game in town in the energy business. People looking for an alternate energy source are joining together in Wheeling. A roomful of those interested in solar power learned more at a presentation on Wednesday at the Wheeling Academy of Law and Science.

"I think it's attractive for different reasons," said Mary Ellen Cassidy, the director of community energy programs. "I think that primary, in hard times, at the top of everyone's list is how can I save money? So this is a way to save money on your utility bills."

Cassidy believes solar energy is a safe and reliable form of energy that gives people a choice of how they'll power their homes. She and several groups are working to form a solar co-op to "go solar" together.

"We have had a great turnout, which I think speaks highly of the interest there is here in the Ohio Valley into solar and to options into what your energy choices might be," Cassidy said.

Both residents and businesses are welcome to join. Any extra power that the individual or business doesn't use can be sold back to the utility companies.

"We're mostly for residence and average buildings looking at a 3 kilowatt system that would start around \$12,000, but with all of the savings involved can get it down to about \$5,000 or so," Cassidy said.

At least 20 people are needed for the co-op, and Cassidy believes they'll hit their goal.

"We can't have too many," she said. "And the more we have the better its going to work as far as community development and for savings for us."

If you'd like to learn more about solar power and joining the co-op, [click here](#).

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- Stayed the same
- Changed



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