

Solar Cooperatives Launched In St. Petersburg To Broaden Support For Solar Power

By [ANDREA MARTIN \(/PEOPLE/ANDREA-MARTIN\)](#) • JAN 31, 2018

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The St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op took place on Tuesday, Jan. 30, with the League of Women Voters and Solar United Neighbors.

PHOTO COURTESY: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Originally published on January 30, 2018 6:26 pm

The first of three Pinellas County solar energy cooperatives was launched Tuesday to help homeowners obtain discounts on residential solar power.

The City of St. Petersburg, Solar United Neighbors of Florida, the League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg Area and the Suncoast Sierra Club aim to raise public awareness of the benefits of starting residential solar power, help residents save money on residential photovoltaic systems and broaden the support for solar power in Florida.

The first of the co-ops (<http://www.facebook.com/LWVSPA/videos/1805565626134316/>) being hosted by the Solar United Neighbors was announced Tuesday by St. Pete Winter Solar Co-op.

Lisa Vanover, League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg Area Board Secretary and Co-Chair of the Sustainability Action Team, invited people to go to their information session on Feb. 7, at 6 p.m., at the

Sunshine Senior Center to learn more.

“We’re educating citizens to become solar advocates,” Vanover said. “It is important for us as the League of Women Voters to have people who know that their voice will be heard.”

Residential solar is becoming more popular due to the power of group-buying. The co-ops being formed in Pinellas County by the League of Women Voters and Solar United Neighbors aim to attract solar power installers through competitive bidding. This competitive bidding gives residents the opportunity to purchase discounted solar photovoltaic systems.

According to Vanover, going solar could potentially lower a homeowner’s energy bill.

“It is very common for people to be able to put enough solar on their roof to be able to only have to pay for the nominal charges,” Vanover said. “Sometimes in the summer, during high air conditioning months, they might have a small energy bill left, but most of the time people are able to put enough solar on their roofs to completely offset it.”

Vanover says going solar can have benefits beyond reducing an energy bill.

“It is a long-term benefit to families, the environment and our economy,” Vanover said. “Solar has really driven our economy and created a lot of jobs, especially in the State of Florida. Our solar co-op has made a huge economic impact, both for individual families and for our economy, overall.”


According to Vanover, so far, there have been over 700 home solar energy systems installed in Florida. This is the 25th solar co-op in Florida since 2016.


“We have a lot of people who are very engaged,” Vanover said. “People want solar in Florida, and we’re really excited to be helping them get it.”

Residents looking to attend upcoming public solar information meetings can register at the Solar United Neighbors website (<https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida/>).

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