



GRID Alternatives Launches 2015 Tribal Solarthon

Two-week event will bring solar power and job training to Native American communities in four states

Oakland CA, October 1, 2015 – GRID Alternatives, America’s largest non-profit solar installer, today announced its national [Tribal Solarthon event](#). Between September 28 and October 9, GRID Alternatives is partnering with four tribes in California, New York, South Dakota and Arizona to install solar power and provide solar job training for tribal members. [U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell was on hand](#) at the Shinnecock Nation near Southampton, New York today to help kick off the event and put a spotlight on energy and economic issues in Native American communities.

Nearly 30 percent of Native Americans lived in poverty in 2013, the highest rate of any ethnic group and double the national average, and an estimated 15,000 households on Navajo lands have no access to electricity at all. Solar energy represents an opportunity to address energy poverty, reduce family electricity costs and provide well-paid career opportunities for Tribal members.

“Pairing clean, renewable energy with workforce development is a win for everyone,” said Tim Willink, Director of Tribal Programs for GRID Alternatives. “We’ve seen our model work in a wide variety of Tribal communities and we’re excited to continue building partnerships with Tribes, Federal and state agencies, and the private sector to provide access across the country.”

Since 2010, GRID Alternatives has partnered with over 30 tribes to install solar electric systems for more than 330 tribal member families, totaling 1.5 MW of clean power, and trained nearly 200 tribal members in solar installation. The systems will save families up to 90 percent on electricity costs. The organization formally launched its national tribal program in 2014 with a long-term goal of building permanent infrastructure to make solar power and job training accessible to tribal communities throughout the US.

The Solarthon event is sponsored by Wells Fargo Foundation through a five-year, \$2 million national expansion grant awarded to GRID Alternatives in 2012. Additional funders include the Department of Energy and GRID Alternatives equipment partners SunEdison, SunPower Corp., Enphase Energy, SnapNrack and IronRidge.

“GRID Alternatives is positively impacting communities across the U.S.,” said Mary Wenzel, head of environmental affairs for Wells Fargo. “We are excited to be a leading sponsor of such important work.”

The 2015 Tribal Solarthon projects include:

- [Bishop Paiute, Bishop CA, Sept. 28-Oct. 2](#): This four-home project will launch a U.S. Department of Energy grant for 22 home solar installations and include an energy fair to increase awareness about solar energy within the tribe. GRID Alternatives has partnered with the Bishop Paiute Tribe since 2013, bringing solar power to over 50 families to-date, while providing solar job training to more than 30 tribal job trainees, including six women.

- Shinnecock Nation near Southampton NY, Sept. 28-Oct. 1: Two grid-tied solar systems will be installed on single family homes on tribal lands outside Southampton NY, kicking off a project vision of 50 residential installations and a battery-backed system on the Shinnecock Community Center. The Shinnecock Nation was hard-hit by Superstorm Sandy and this project will provide emergency power backup and local grid resiliency.
- Leupp Chapter, Navajo Nation, Leupp AZ, Oct. 5-7: A Vietnam veteran in the Navajo Nation will receive an off-grid solar system on a home built by Navajo Veterans. Tribal members from the Tolani Lake, Leupp and Bird Springs Chapter Houses will participate in the installation.
- Rosebud Sioux, Rosebud SD, Oct. 7-9: GRID will work with the Rosebud community to install a grid-tied residential PV system to provide solar training for students at the Sinte Gleska University, as well as local high school students who recently participated in a STEM training with GRID in Denver, CO.

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ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES

GRID Alternatives is America's largest non-profit solar installer bringing clean energy technology and job training to low-income families and underserved communities through a network of community partners, volunteers, and philanthropic supporters. GRID has installed 5,700 rooftop solar systems with a combined installed capacity of 19.4MW, saving \$145 million in lifetime electricity costs, preventing 444,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and providing over 22,000 people with solar training. GRID has eleven regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the Mid-Atlantic, the New York tri-state area, Tribal communities nationwide, and Nicaragua. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org

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