



COLORADO
Energy Office



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Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association, GRID Alternatives and Colorado Energy Office Partner on Nation's Largest Low-Income Community Solar Project

The 1.95 megawatt Coyote Ridge Community Solar Farm will reduce electricity costs for qualifying households, affordable housing providers and nonprofit organizations

DENVER – Thursday, Aug. 10, 2017 – The Colorado Energy Office (CEO), GRID Alternatives (GRID), and Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association (PVREA) announce the development of a community solar project that will lower the electric bills of qualified low-income residents, affordable housing providers and nonprofit organizations in the utility's service territory. Known as the Coyote Ridge Community Solar Farm, the project is part of a statewide initiative to demonstrate how the low-income community solar model can be optimized to reduce energy costs for utilities' highest need customers – those who spend a significant portion of their income, 4 percent or more, on utility bills.

"PVREA's Coyote Ridge Community Solar Farm is a thoughtful demonstration of tailoring the low-income community solar model to broaden access and subscriber benefits," said Kathleen Staks, Executive Director of the Colorado Energy Office. "This project further conveys scalability to meet local community needs, an objective of our statewide initiative. CEO supports the expansion of a co-op's ability to bring more projects like these online."

GRID received a \$1.2 million grant from CEO in August 2015 to partner with utilities to implement low-income community solar. CEO and GRID selected utility partners, each of which is piloting a slight variation on the low-income community solar model to address the unique needs of rural utilities and their service customers. The projects selected are both affordable and scalable for utility partners, and offer great potential to expand across the state. The PVREA project will be the seventh project installed under the initiative to date.

The 1.95 megawatt Coyote Ridge Community Solar Farm will demonstrate complex financial modeling, a mix of low-income and community benefit subscribers, and unique location siting. A majority of the energy output generated by the Coyote Ridge Community Solar Farm will benefit low-income households, affordable housing providers and nonprofit organizations located within PVREA's service territory. The project is sited on nine acres of land south of the Larimer County Landfill near Fort Collins.

"The benefits of this project ripple throughout the community," said Chuck Watkins, Executive Director of GRID Alternatives Colorado. "Not only are we increasing access to renewables and lowering energy costs for high-burden

individuals and community institutions, the project is also providing over a thousand hours of job training in solar installation, preparing people for long-term careers in the field.”

“Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association is pleased to partner with GRID Alternatives and the Colorado Energy Office on a solar project to benefit cooperative members who have desired to participate in solar energy but have been unable,” PVREA President and CEO Jeff Wadsworth commented. “The Coyote Ridge Community Solar Farm exhibits the cooperative nature of our local electric co-op – it brings all of our members together by providing an opportunity to participate in the construction and energy output of the solar farm.”

PVREA and GRID will host a community event to dedicate and celebrate the solar farm installation on Aug. 15 at the Larimer County Landfill, located at 5887 Taft Hill Road in Fort Collins. Community organizations, PVREA members, and other interested individuals are invited to participate in the construction of the solar array as volunteers throughout August and early September. To learn more about how to subscribe to the system or participate in a volunteer day, please contact GRID Alternatives at 303.968.1326 or Colorado@gridalternatives.org.

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About Colorado Energy Office

The Colorado Energy Office works to deliver cost-effective energy services and advance innovative energy solutions for the benefit of all Coloradans. Go to colorado.gov/energyoffice to learn more.

About GRID Alternatives

GRID Alternatives Colorado is an affiliate of GRID Alternatives, the nation’s largest nonprofit 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. For more information, visit gridalternatives.org/colorado.

About Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association

Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative serving more than 40,000 homes and businesses in Boulder, Larimer and Weld Counties in Northern Colorado. See pvrea.com for more information.