



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Summit County Residents Seek Power in Numbers for Solar Energy

*Community bulk purchase effort launches May 14<sup>th</sup>, offering discounts on solar*

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**Summit County, UT** – A community-led program in Summit County and Park City is giving new meaning to the phrase *power in numbers*. Summit County citizens have come together with non-profit organization Utah Clean Energy to launch Summit Community Solar – a program to help residents tackle the solar process as a team, realize great cost savings through bulk purchasing power, and energize their communities with clean energy. Summit Community Solar will host its launch event on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm at the Swaner EcoCenter (1258 Center Drive, Park City, UT, 84098), where interested citizens can learn more about the effort, meet the selected contractor, get answers to solar questions, and take the first step to going solar.

“We know that people want clean, inexhaustible solar energy for their homes, but they are often deterred by the cost and complexity,” states Sara Baldwin, Senior Policy Associate for Utah Clean Energy and Project Advisor for Summit Community Solar. “The highly successful community solar model overcomes those barriers and, most importantly, puts more solar on more rooftops, which brings economic and environmental benefits to the entire community.”

Summit Community Solar is available to all Summit County residents. Interested individuals can take the first step – a Solar Survey to evaluate the feasibility of a solar installation on your roof – beginning March 14<sup>th</sup> through August 12<sup>th</sup> at [www.mycommunitysolar.org/summit](http://www.mycommunitysolar.org/summit); there is no financial commitment until contracts are signed with the contractor<sup>1</sup>. All contracts to install must be initiated with the contractor by September 24<sup>th</sup>. Participants who choose to go solar will be able to take advantage of a more streamlined process and significant discounts on quality solar photovoltaic (PV) installations (about 30 - 35% off the national average price for residential solar<sup>2</sup>). The discount grows with the number of installations, making this a truly community-centered effort.

Summit Community Solar is a project of Utah Clean Energy (a 501c3 non-profit), supported by Summit County and Park City and in collaboration with a volunteer citizen Steering Committee, consisting of residents of Summit County and Park City. The Steering Committee spearheaded the entire contractor selection effort, which entailed a rigorous and highly competitive, community-driven Request for Proposals (RFP) and bidder interview process<sup>3</sup>. Local solar contractor Alpenglow Solar was selected from a competitive pool of applicants to be the official contractor for Summit Community Solar.

“I got involved in Summit Community Solar because I am keenly interested in supporting the movement towards a more sustainable world for future generations, internationally and right here in our backyards,” said

Lindsay Walsh, a volunteer member of the Steering Committee. “A bulk-purchase community model is an excellent solution to reduce cost barriers and make it easier for people to adopt solar. I am excited about the prospects of this project and its potential impact.”

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### **The Cost of Solar Energy**

For an average residential solar project, the community bulk purchase program provides historically low costs for solar, saving participants 30-35% off the installed price, before eligible incentives

- The average Utah home uses about 9,000 kWh of electricity a year.
- A 4kW solar system produces 5,400 kWh of electricity a year. To put that in context, a 4kW solar system would cut the average home’s energy cost down by more than half!
  - Avg. Savings on utility bill with 4 kW of solar:
    - \$60 per month
    - \$720 per year
  - Expected Year 1 Return on Investment (with incentives): 6%
  - Expected Lifetime Return on Investment (with incentives): 106%

<b>Price Comparison for a 4kW Rooftop Residential Solar PV System: Summit Community Solar vs. Utah Average</b>		
	4 kW Solar PV Installation (Total Cost)	
Average Cost of residential solar in Utah	\$ 20,000.00	The average price for solar energy installation is about \$5.00 per watt. Most Utah houses install between 2-4 kW solar systems.
Summit Community Solar Average Cost	\$ 12,880 – \$ 14,000	The installed cost through SCS will be between \$3.22 and \$3.50 per watt <sup>4</sup> (depending on hardware choice and the system size.)
Summit Community Solar Cost after available tax incentives <sup>5</sup>	\$ 7,616 – \$ 8,400	The state of Utah offers a 25% tax credit on solar systems, up to \$2,000. In addition, the Federal Government offers a 30% tax credit with no cap (expires 12/2016).

### **About Summit Community Solar**

Summit Community Solar is an innovative community bulk-purchase solar initiative designed to help homeowners overcome the logistical and financial hurdles of going solar. Modeled after other successful campaigns, Summit Community Solar is drawing on the lessons learned from other communities to launch a program in Summit County. Local citizens, non-profits, and local government are working together to lead the Summit Community Solar effort and ensure success. The effort is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, through the Wasatch Solar Challenge<sup>6</sup>, the Salt Lake City Patagonia Outlet, and the George S. & Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation.

### **About the Steering Committee and RFP Process**

The volunteer, citizen-led Steering Committee (formed in February 2013) is responsible for the contractor selection process, research, recruitment, marketing, and events. At the start of 2013, the Steering Committee initiated a highly competitive bid process through a widely distributed RFP. After receiving several quality bids from local solar contractors and conducting a rigorous scoring and interview process, the citizen participants of the Steering Committee selected a qualified team of solar contractors to provide discount pricing for high quality

residential solar installations across Summit County. The Steering Committee will continue to be a resource for all participants throughout the project, providing guidance, information and oversight to ensure success.

For information on Summit Community Solar, visit [www.MyCommunitySolar.org/summit](http://www.MyCommunitySolar.org/summit)

### **About Utah Clean Energy**

Utah Clean Energy is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest organization partnering to build the new clean energy economy. Through their work to stop energy waste, create clean energy and build a smart energy future, Utah Clean Energy is committed to creating a future that ensures healthy, thriving communities for all, empowered and sustained by clean energy. Utah Clean Energy spearheaded Utah's first community solar effort, Salt Lake Community Solar, in 2012. [www.UtahCleanEnergy.org](http://www.UtahCleanEnergy.org).

### **About Summit County**

Summit County has a vested interest in protecting and enhancing the environment, the economy, and quality of life through reducing energy consumption and helping the community become more sustainable in its use of resources. Summit County is pleased to partner with Park City Municipal, Utah Clean Energy and the group of highly motivated citizens that share the County's commitment to providing more sustainable use of resources that help maintain the fabulous quality of life enjoyed in Summit County. Summit Community Solar supports the County's sustainability goals to increase adoption of renewable energy. [www.SummitCounty.org](http://www.SummitCounty.org)

### **About Park City**

Clean and local renewable energy is a high priority for the Park City community and City Council. Park City is excited see so many citizen volunteers commit their time to raising the profile of solar power in our region. For more information on Park City's renewable energy efforts, including municipal solar projects, visit [www.ParkCity.org/Renewable](http://www.ParkCity.org/Renewable)

### **Additional Media Contacts:**

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<sup>1</sup> All contracts and financial negotiations and obligations will be between the selected contractor(s) and the customer. Summit Community Solar is not responsible for any compensation or financial obligations as a result of this initiative.

<sup>2</sup> The average residential solar price in Utah is consistent with the national average. According to the Solar Energy Industries Association, the national average installed price for residential solar in the fourth quarter of 2012 was about \$5 per watt (<http://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-industry-data>). The discount through Summit Community Solar increases as the number of committed participants and solar installations increase; individual cost-estimates may vary depending on the factors specific to their unique solar installation. A base level discount will be offered to all eligible participants.

<sup>3</sup> The contractor selection process was executed by volunteer Steering Committee members on behalf of Summit Community Solar. Summit County, Park City, and Utah Clean Energy did NOT participate in the evaluation, scoring or final contractor selection.

<sup>4</sup> This price is for a standard rooftop solar PV system; the price does not reflect costs for optional monitoring systems, permitting fees, and other additional costs for more customized solar systems.

<sup>5</sup> Subject to tax incentive eligibility.

<sup>6</sup> The Wasatch Solar Challenge is a team of local government jurisdictions and part of the US Department of Energy (DOE) Rooftop Solar Challenge, powered by the DOE SunShot Initiative.