

Powder River had our annual meeting at the beginning of the month. After that, I was out in the field learning about energy efficiency measures that can be used to reduce energy use at wastewater treatment facilities. It is an exciting topic that may have applications around our state.

Wastewater treatment may not be something most people think a lot about, but it takes a lot of energy. Through controlled experiments and testing, the city of Jackson's wastewater treatment facility has reduced their energy use by around 70%. That's huge! The best part is that it didn't take a lot of new equipment or other expensive upgrades, so it is something other communities can afford!

This month's featured solar story is Val and Jerry Burgess of Sheridan, Wyoming. Val and Jerry have both active and passive solar. Passive solar is often less expensive than solar systems. Passive solar doesn't generate electricity, but can be used to grow food year-round and for home heating. When used for heating, it reduces electricity, gas, and other heating fuels. In a place with winters as cold as we have here, savings can add up fast!



Click here to learn more about Val and Jerry's passive solar greenhouse: <https://youtu.be/xSORy45ovkg>

Along with the wastewater efficiency I mentioned above, I also saw Wyoming's first community solar installation in Jackson. It is still being installed and will be finished around the end of the month. Lower Valley Energy agreed to a "Virtual Net Metering" arrangement, where customers are not directly hooked up to the solar installation. The way it works is by allowing customers to purchase a share in the installation. Energy credits are then applied to the accounts of those customers.



Community solar is still not available for most Lower Valley Energy customers. The arrangement is only being offered to large city customers. It is still an exciting development. This is a model that could be followed by other state utilities, but customer demand will have to pave the way.

If you are interested in having something like this offered in your area, you need to contact your utility and let them know. The more utilities hear from their customers about their interest in solar, the more they are going to listen. Customers have the power to make changes, but only if they are actively talking to their utilities.

Letting your legislators know you are interested in seeing more solar offered in your area is another great way to get involved. Once again, legislators don't know how much interest there is unless they are hearing from the people they represent. City council members and local officials are also great people to talk to about your solar interest.

We will be making a video about the virtual net metering installation in the near future. There are so many great solar stories to tell in Wyoming! If there is a solar story you think we should tell, let us know.

Solar stories help to let people know what is happening with solar and also make it more visible to policy makers and utilities. When we make sure people see how much interest there is in solar and how much opportunity it can provide our state, the more solar we are going to see.

Right now, we would like to showcase northwest, central, and southwest Wyoming solar stories. We would also like to tell more stories of businesses and non-profits using solar energy. Let's shout it from the rooftops: Solar is for everyone!

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Solar Power is growing in Wyoming! It is growing because of your interest. If you have ideas or resources (funding, installers we may not know about, programs, etc.) please let us know. Your ideas help to move solar forward, and none of our progress during the past year could have happened without people just like you!

You are receiving this email because you came to one of our solar events and because of your interest in solar energy.

