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North Country Communities Vote For Clean Energy

Whitefield, Randolph, Franconia, Stratford and Gorham all approve funding for energy saving projects

Throughout the course of the past week, five Coos County communities approved funding for solar projects which combined will result in over a half a million dollars in energy savings over their lifetimes and leverage as much as \$340 thousand dollars in grant support.

- The Town of Whitefield voted unanimously to replace and insulate the roof of their fire station, and put solar arrays on the roofs of the fire station, library and town buildings, totalling 66 kW in generation capacity.
- Franconia voted to install an 18.2 kW ground mounted solar array behind their town hall.
- Randolph set aside \$20,000 for an energy efficiency capital reserve fund to improve the energy performance of municipal buildings.
- The Gorham/Randolph/Shelburne Cooperative school district voted to fund a 124 kW ground mounted solar array to help offset the electrical bills of the Edward Fenn Elementary School.
- The town of Gorham voted to create a \$10,000 capital reserve fund to install solar on municipal buildings.
- The town of Stratford voted to install a 50 kW solar array at the town transfer station, after having already installed a 20 kW array at the town hall in 2021.

In all these projects are expected to generate more than 6 million kilowatt hours of clean electricity for these communities over a 25 year period. The energy savings will not only reduce the local municipal energy bills, but also push down regional wholesale electricity prices whenever the arrays are generating power.

“We are excited to be a part of the solution and hope we get the grant,” said Gorham Randolph Shelburne Cooperative School District Superintendent David Backler.

These are just the latest projects that have been helped across the finish line by Clean Energy NH’s North Country Circuit Rider, Melissa Elander, who offers technical assistance—free-of-charge—to Coos County towns that want to deploy clean energy and reduce their energy bills. “These votes are representative of the momentum that is building in the North Country,” said Elander. “Towns are seeing they can save on their municipal budgets by investing in these projects.”

The Circuit Rider program is funded by the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, and has recently announced that it will be expanding its offerings with a second position, the Community Energy Coordinator. This new position will offer free technical assistance to small businesses that want to reduce their energy. Clean Energy NH is currently seeking to expand this program to other parts of the state.

“The Circuit Rider concept is so simple but so powerful,” said Sam Evans-Brown, Executive Director of Clean Energy NH, “We simply connect towns and businesses to existing programs and help them access funds that are already available. We can and should be doing this all throughout New Hampshire.”

The North Country Circuit rider program began in 2018, and has helped communities complete over two dozen projects, which have attracted over a half a million dollars in competitive grant funding and are saving those



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communities over \$150,000 a year in energy costs. Towns or small businesses interested in engaging with the Circuit Rider program should contact Melissa Elander via email at melissa@cleanenergynh.org.

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Clean Energy NH is the state's leading clean energy advocate and educator, representing over 500 clean tech businesses, municipalities, and individuals. Clean Energy NH is a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) non-profit that provides services and resources to support the Granite State's clean tech industries, policymakers, and communities.