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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2024

GROUP BUY PROGRAMS MAKE CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY CHEAPER

Group Buy Programs Make Clean Energy Technology More Affordable

With energy costs rising, everyone is looking for ways to lower their bills. Installing solar panels or heat pumps can significantly reduce these expenses, but upfront costs can get in the way of pursuing these clean energy solutions. Fortunately, residents of Champaign, Vermilion, and Piatt Counties have the opportunity to pursue solar and geothermal heat pump systems at below market prices, thanks to the Solar and Geo Urbana Champaign group buy programs!

Led by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) and the City of Urbana with support from many other municipalities and community organizations, these initiatives help homeowners and businesses in the region save on energy costs while reducing their carbon footprint. These group buy programs bring community members together to learn about residential solar and geothermal options and purchase in bulk, offering cost savings and incentives not available to individual buyers.

Scott Tess, Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Urbana, emphasizes the programs' advantages: "Solar UC and Geo UC make it faster, easier, and cheaper to get clean, renewable energy systems for your home or business. And this promotes clean air and reduces greenhouse pollution."

This year's programs build on the past successes of group buy programs in the area: this is the ninth year of the Solar UC program, and the fourth year of the Geothermal UC program. Over these years, many residents have taken advantage of the cost-saving programs.

"My family in rural Piatt County participated in the 2023 Solar Urbana-Champaign Group Buy," Amanda Pankau said. "We have had several neighbors, friends, and family participate in the past eight years of the program, and we were so excited to finally go solar! There are so many great solar installers out there and the group-buy helped us make a competitive decision about selecting our installer."

Geothermal heat pumps aren't quite as well-known as solar arrays, but the financial and environmental benefits of these systems are large.

"I've owned a geothermal system for over 7 years now," Chris Reynolds of Springfield said. "It has kept my power bills low while keeping my family comfortable. It operates

quietly and efficiently all year round. Owning a geothermal system has been a great experience.”

With rising energy costs, investing in solar energy or geothermal heat pumps offers immediate energy savings while shielding against future uncertainties. Taylor Ball, Grow Solar’s solar program manager, highlights the benefits: “Through our group buy model, participants can save on their energy bills right away, while also building long-term equity and energy independence.”

Geo and Solar UC partner with local contractors, ensuring that participant’s clean energy investments stay within the local economy. These fully vetted contractors provide comprehensive support, including free site assessments, customized system design, installation, and ongoing maintenance.

To get started with either of these group buy programs, residents should attend a “Power Hour”: free educational sessions for individuals interested in learning about solar or geothermal technology. In a relaxed, low-pressure environment attendees can ask questions and request a free site assessment to evaluate the solar or geothermal potential of their properties.

Geo UC’s first presentation will be on April 23, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom ([register online](#)). Solar UC’s first webinar will be Wednesday, April 24, 5:30-6:30 p.m. on Zoom. The first in-person event will be at Common Ground Food Co-Op on Tuesday, April 30, 5:30 p.m.

For media inquiries or further information, please contact:

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About Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA):

The Midwest Renewable Energy Association promotes renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration.

About Solar & Geo Urbana Champaign:

Solar Urbana-Champaign, led by MREA and the City of Urbana with support from many other municipalities and community organizations, facilitates group buying of solar panels and geothermal heat pumps to make these technologies more accessible and affordable for residents and businesses in Champaign, Piatt, and Vermilion Counties.

For more information about the City of Urbana, please visit www.urbanaininois.us.

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