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CITY OF URBANA DESIGNATED “SOLSMART GOLD” FOR ADVANCING SOLAR ENERGY GROWTH

The City of Urbana is receiving a Gold designation from the national SolSmart program for making it faster, easier, and more affordable for homes and businesses to go solar.

This designation recognizes Urbana’s sustainability programming for taking bold steps to encourage solar energy growth and remove obstacles to solar development. For companies looking to expand, a SolSmart Gold designation is a signal that Urbana is “open for solar business.” More than 450 municipalities, counties, and regional organizations have achieved SolSmart designation since the program launched in 2016.

“The United States Department of Energy SolSmart program gave us a framework to make sure our rules and regulations don’t stand in the way of expanding renewable energy development,” Scott Tess, Sustainability & Resilience Officer for the City of Urbana, said. “The SolSmart Gold certification effort was championed by City Planner Marcus Ricci involving collaboration across multiple divisions to help make solar development rules faster, easier, and cheaper.”

As a SolSmart designee, the City of Urbana is helping solar companies reduce the cost of installations and pass those savings on to consumers. This allows even more local homes and businesses to obtain affordable, clean, and reliable electricity through solar. The actions the City has taken will help encourage solar companies to do business in the area, driving economic development and creating local jobs.

To receive designation, cities and counties make changes to their local processes to reduce the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system. This includes evaluating local permitting and inspection processes, as well as planning and zoning procedures. SolSmart designees also develop innovations in community engagement, government operations, and solar market development.

SolSmart uses objective criteria to award communities points based on the actions they take to reduce barriers to solar energy growth. Communities that take sufficient action are designated either Gold, Silver, or Bronze.

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

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