



Civic Action

A monthly update from the National Civic League

May 2016

Solar Energy - one of many ways cities are taking the lead on sustainability

By Doug Linkhart, President of NCL

One of our goals at the National Civic League is to promote civic engagement in local sustainability efforts. As a national partner in the SolSmart initiative, (described later in this newsletter) we are hoping to encourage cities to engage residents and businesses in their efforts to expand the use of solar energy.

Of course, expanding the use of solar energy is one of only dozens of strategies being pursued by cities to help combat climate change. Nevertheless, according to the Solar Foundation, solar energy is the nation's fastest-growing source of electricity generation, and has the potential to be the largest generation source by 2050.

Meanwhile, cities are working on broader initiatives to battle climate change. The National League of Cities sent a delegation of 11 local officials to the Paris climate talks last December, prior to which 120 cities signed climate change agreements. A similar UN Climate Summit in 2014 created the Compact of Mayors, a pledge to combat climate change signed by over 500 cities. Additionally, NLC sponsored the Planet Forward Summit last month, which brought together local officials, students and other stakeholders to generate ideas for "transforming our cities in the coming decades."

If your city is not already on board, please sign up for these and other efforts. To enroll in [SolSmart](#), please see the article later in this newsletter. For more information on programs at the National League of Cities, visit <http://www.sustainablecitiesinstitute.org/>. To learn about the Compact of Mayors, visit <http://www.compactofmayors.org/>.

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NCL Supported Program - SolSmart - Launches

SolSmart is a new community designation program designed to recognize more than 300 communities that have taken steps to make it easier for businesses and residents to go solar. Communities pursuing the SolSmart designation will be eligible for no-cost technical assistance from a team of national solar experts.

The program aims to reduce solar "soft costs," the non-hardware costs of going solar like permitting, financing, and installation.



These costs are passed on to solar customers and can increase the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system.

The SolSmart designation program will provide high-profile, national recognition for communities that have made it cheaper and easier for solar customers to invest in solar energy. Achieving designation also tells solar companies that a community is "open for business," attracting new solar businesses.

For more information on SolSmart visit: www.solsmart.org

Creating a Culture of Engagement (A National Civic Review Case Study)

Fort Collins, Colorado, is creating a citywide "culture of engagement," emphasizing the value of public participation in its hiring practices, planning decisions, neighborhood disputes and policy discussions. For example, before deliberating on important city issues, city council members are provided with a written public engagement plan. "We value public opinion and feel that better decisions are made based upon engaging the public," noted one city staffer in a recent interview. "That's the ethic from which everything derives." [Read about public engagement practices in Fort Collins in this case study featured in the most recent issue of the National Civic Review](#)

Speakers & Workshops Announced for AAC 2016.

Speakers include Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, among others

National Civic League is proud to highlight community efforts that ***ensure that all our children are healthy and successful in school and life*** for the 2016 All-America City Awards. Working with groups like **Attendance Works, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading** and the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**, our goal with this spotlight is to raise up local



examples of innovative and effective community problem-solving that recognizes all influences on the success of children and uses all sectors to address those influences and to ***provide access to experts in the field to support individuals and groups working on these complex issues.***

Workshops on Friday June 17th will explore how to embed teen empowerment strategies in a youth organization, elements for support around grade-level reading and approaches to debunking the myth of the racial human hierarchy that is present in America today. For more information and to register to attend the workshops, [please visit here.](#)

We also welcome several esteemed speakers and elected officials at our opening plenary session including **City and County of Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock, AJ Jones from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Colorado Governor John W. Hickenlooper.** NCL is also pleased to have **Hon. Barbara O'Brien, Denver Public School Board member** and Senior Consultant at the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and **Colorado Lt. Governor Donna Lynne** at our closing award ceremony on Sunday June 19th

[Register now to experience AAC](#)

We've Moved!

To support our growing staff, NCL has moved to new offices. The new office puts us closer to the capitol and other great Denver non-profits. Our new home is:



190 E. 9th Ave. Suite 200
Denver, CO 80203

Stop in and say hi if you're in the area. We're excited to show off the new digs.

Denver, CO 80203

Social Media



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