



What Can I Do in my Home, School Business and Community for Clean Energy?

Prepared by Scott Sklar (2004)

Why is Renewable Energy important? The extraction, conversion and utilization of energy are the single largest causes of emissions changing the global climate, and are the greatest sources of air and water pollution. Energy imports, which are rising to nearly 60 percent, are the single largest component of the US trade debt.

Why energy? The extraction, conversion and utilization of energy is the single largest causes of air and water pollution and emissions causing changes in global climate. Imports of energy constitute the single largest component of the u.s. trade deficit, meaning we import more energy than cars, electronics or any other item or resource).

Nine suggested activities for students, parents and teachers and business owners:

1. For your health: Find out how many "bad air" days are in your community. Too many ozone alert days show non-compliance with the Clean Air Act requirements. *Note: your local newspaper or local TV weatherman may have this information, or contact EPA at: <http://www.epa.gov/ozone>*
2. For your pocketbook: Find out how much solar energy resources your state has and how much your home, local school, or business pays per year for electricity, and for natural gas (or heating oil or propane) for heating and cooling. Note: solar resources in your state or "insolation" can be obtained from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) via <http://www.nrel.gov>(enter insolation and click Search). Your monthly electric and natural gas bills for your home and business are sources for your energy costs as are school administration budget reports from the school board or county governments for local school energy information.
3. For your home: If you have a swimming pool, purchase a solar pool

heater to add more months of swimming! If you have electric or oil-fired home water heating, solar water heating is now cost-effective. If you need outside lighting for pathways, your patio, area security - buy solar-charged lighting units. And if you want reliable electricity in any amount, for emergency back-up power, computers, and communications - buy a solar electric (photovoltaics) or small wind energy system. Note: Reference www.seia.org and check the company index or state and regional chapter index, for company contacts in your state or area. For sizing your solar system, look at the "Solarsizer" program at www.crest.org or www.awea.org for wind energy information.

4. For your school: The third largest budget line item in schools after salaries and benefits is energy costs. Ask your teachers and administrators to allow you or others to perform an energy audit to see where insulation, energy efficient lighting and other options can be used. Check to see if solar can be used to save money for water heating, lighting, or back-up electricity for computers and other critical services. Develop some activities or "show-and-tell" sessions on solar and renewable energy. (*Note: check www.crest.org and click Sun's Joules and also look at Solarsizer and School Energy Doctor*).
5. For your church, mosque, synagogue or house of worship: Learn more about global guardianship and what virtually every religious denomination is doing through the North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology at www.solarstewards.org. Consider installing a solar system for water heating, electricity, outside lighting at your house of worship, religious school, nursing home, hospital or any other building owned or run by a religious institution. (*see web site for schools*).
6. For yourself: Buy some personal solar items such as solar battery chargers for your car or boat, solar watches, solar-powered radios, solar mole evictors for your garden, solar batteries for your cellular phone, and solar flashlights.
7. For your business (or a local business owner): Check your utility rates and know what percentage relates to a specific activity such as lighting, space heating or cooling, or water heating. Know if you have specific time-of-use-rates, ratchet rates or demand charges. A great student project is to research uses of solar by businesses and government in your community and show it to other local businesses. *Note: For more information contact Million Solar Roofs at www.eren.doe.gov/millionroofs.*
8. For your state, local and community government or homeowner association: Contact a local official at any level and ask them what they are doing to promote solar, energy efficiency and other clean energy options. Ask your city government if they offer analysis,

technical assistance and purchasing goals for solar applications or "green power". Show them examples of other communities using solar when they are implementing lighting for building security, parks, bus stops, road signs - rather than running or ditching electric wires or adding step down transformers from power lines. Government should set the example! Ask them to visit other government solar installations. *Note: the federal government is the largest owner of buildings and the largest user of energy in the world. State and local governments are the second largest users, so check: www.eren.doe.gov/femp.*

9. For your greater knowledge: Learn more by reading, web surfing, and doing. Look at the following publications catalogues and web sites: American Solar Energy Society (ASES) at www.ases.org, Florida Solar Energy Center at www.fsec.ucf.edu, the North Carolina Solar Center at www.ncsc.ncsu.edu, or plan your solar future playing the Sun's Joules at www.crest.org, or dig deeper at the Renewable Energy Policy Project (REPP) at www.repp.org, or check out lists of other web sites from this web site at: www.thestellagroupltd.com.