



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Earns ‘SolSmart Gold’ Honors for Solar Energy Programs

Jan. 11, 2018 – **Clear Creek County Communications, Colo.** –Clear Creek County received its first “SolSmart Gold” designation at the Jan. 9th Board of County Commissioners’ meeting, for advancing solar energy growth around the County. As part of the program, the County 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 Clear Creek County 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 the County is “open for solar business.”

SolSmart is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. More than 150 cities, counties, and small towns have achieved SolSmart designation since the program launched in 2016.

“It is truly an honor to receive this top designation,” said Fred Rollenhagen, Clear Creek County Community Development Director. “It’s nice to be recognized for our hard work, but this process also helped us improve our permitting process efficiency so residents and businesses are encouraged to ‘go solar’ and make a difference in their County.”

As a SolSmart designee, Clear Creek County is helping solar companies greatly 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—while helping encourage solar companies to do business in the area, driving economic development and creating local jobs.

To receive a 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 processes, as well as planning and zoning procedures. For Clear Creek County’s Community Development Division, many of the processes recognized by SolSmart had been in place for years, making it possible to fulfill Bronze and Silver status—and, go directly to Gold status. Under the validation status, their 225 points (needed to attain Gold status) came from Planning/ Zoning, Permitting, Inspection, Community Engagement, and more. SolSmart uses objective criteria to award communities points based on the actions they take to reduce barriers to solar energy development; and, they are designated either gold, silver, or bronze.

One such example of simplifying the process is the creation of a landing page on the County’s main website, <http://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/index.aspx?nid=877> . The “one-stop” page provides building code information, an application form, fees associated with the process, and the required inspection list.

As part of the SolSmart program, a team of national experts provides no-cost technical assistance to help communities achieve designation. All cities and counties are eligible to join the SolSmart program and receive this technical assistance. Interested communities can learn more at SolSmart.org.



From left: County Commissioner Sean Wood; Deb Kirkham, Building Inspector; Brad Rutledge, SolSmart Team Member; Fred Rollenhagen, Community Development Director; and, Randy Wheelock, County Commissioner.

For more information, call John Bryan, Communications Director, at 303-679-2307, or email: jbryan@co.clear-creek.co.us.

Official Clear Creek County website: <http://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/>

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