

# NH COMMUNITIES SAVING BIG ON ELECTRICITY THROUGH CPCNH

## Electric Customers in Ten Communities to Generate Tens of Millions of Dollars in Savings and Benefits

Henry Herndon

Community Power, authorized under NH RSA 53-E, democratizes energy governance by empowering towns, cities, and counties to choose where their electricity comes from on behalf of their residents and businesses, work with utilities on local energy infrastructure upgrades, and provide electricity supply rates and services to all customers participating in the program.

On March 13, on the steps of Nashua City Hall in New Hampshire, The Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) announced their base electric rate of 15.8 ¢ per kilowatt-hour, which starting in May 2023 will generate \$5.8 million of dollars in savings for electric customers in ten New Hampshire communities in the first three months alone.

This historic announcement marks the launch of Community Power, enabled by the legislature in 2019 and is now launching with an initial wave of ten communities: Enfield, Exeter, Hanover, Harrisville, Lebanon, Nashua, Peterborough, Plainfield, Rye, and Walpole.

The Coalition's rate represents a 22% savings relative to Eversource's energy supply rate, 28% relative to Liberty Utilities, and 39% energy supply savings for Unitil customers. CPCNH provides service to communities served by all three utilities. Under Community Power, electric distribution utilities continue to own and operate the power grid while local communities gain control over where their power is sourced from.

Nashua energy customers are expected to save \$2.6 million in the first three months of Nashua Community Power service. "Nashua is proud to be among the first ten communities that are charting a new path when it comes to where we get our energy," said Nashua Mayor



On March 13, on the steps of Nashua City Hall, Community Power Coalition of NH members announced a base rate of 15.8 cents per kilowatt hour, which will result in savings for ratepayers totaling \$5.8 million in the first three months of the program. (Courtesy photo)

Jim Donchess. "Community Power Coalition is a brand-new institution that gives Nashua and other communities the ability to control price volatility in the short- and long-term, and the tools to accelerate the transition to a more economically and environmentally sustainable energy system."

"Innovation is central to the mission of Community Power," said Clifton Below, CPCNH Board Chair, "our Coalition power agency is equipped to build community-scale renewable energy projects that directly benefit our cities and towns for the long-term, and to push other innovations that empower customers with distributed energy resources."

CPCNH is a locally governed non-profit

power agency led by a Board of Directors that consists of individuals appointed by the member communities. CPCNH was formed to:

- Use our collective buying power to lower electricity rates for customers,
- Offer more choices for cleaner supply to customers,
- Give local decision makers and communities control over energy choices, and
- Lead development of smarter state energy policies that directly serve community and customer interests.

"Community Power is about more than short-term rate savings," said Lisa Sweet, the Town of Rye's representative on the CPCNH governance board. "Community Power allows us to build reserve funds

controlled by our local communities — not out of state, for-profit corporations — and decide how those funds are spent and to counter future market volatility and invest back into our local communities. Our ten communities are generating \$8.1 million in reserves in the first three months of operation — that's local wealth to benefit customers for the long-term."

A total of 30 communities have already voted to join the Community Power Coalition and are currently in the process of launching their own Community Power programs. "A key value of the Coalition is the ability to manage a portfolio of energy resources and hedge risk, and for communities to control and adjust rates over time to ensure they can maintain discounts relative to utility pricing. The benefits of Community Power are made possible by a combination of local and state leadership working together to ensure that every city and town in New Hampshire has the opportunity to chart a better energy future for their community" concluded Henry Herndon, Consultant to CPCNH.

Henry Herndon is a principal at Herndon Enterprises and a consultant for the Community Power Coalition of NH. ♻️



# The Wayside Restaurant Joins the Small Business Community Solar Alliance

George Harvey



Wayside's inspection team, Jeff Virge, Karen Zecchinelli, and Chris Moore, at the solar array site in Perkinsville, VT. (Courtesy photo)

In December of 2011, G.E.T. published an article on the Wayside Restaurant. "Wayside Restaurant Earns Vermont Green Restaurant Designation," reported that it had been awarded the designation of "Green Restaurant." Brian and Karen Zecchinelli had worked ten years to bring their restaurant to a high environmental standard (<https://bit.ly/GET-WR-12-11>).

To be designated a Green Restaurant meant meeting eight specific core environmental standards, but it also meant developing an Environmental Action Plan to reduce impacts further. Commenting

on this, Brian Zecchinelli said, "The Wayside will continue to focus on waste reduction, water and energy conservation, pollution prevention, transportation efficiencies and sustainable promotion."

One of the initial goals that was difficult to meet was composting. There was a lot of waste

to compost, because the Wayside serves about a thousand customers per day. To meet this goal, the entire staff of the restaurant had to be aware of what was needed and had to participate in the work.

Now there is more to report. Having already built its own solar hot water system, the Wayside Restaurant has expanded its use of sunshine by getting the electricity it needs from a solar photovoltaic system.

Working with Norwich Solar, the Wayside and five other businesses partnered on a solar array in Perkinsville, Vermont. The Wayside Restaurant has joined with these businesses as members of the Small Business Community Solar Alliance. The array is maintained by Norwich Solar. The system has 2,160 bifacial solar panels and is rated at 500 kilowatts.

The bifacial panels can collect light from both sides. This means sunlight reflected from the snow is collected at the back of the panel, while the front is lighted directly by the sun, increasing the output of the array.

The Wayside Restaurant is open from 7:00 AM to 8:30 PM, every day. During that time, it can use a lot of electricity. As a customer of Green Mountain Power, the restaurant can take advantage of its net-metering system, so the solar system is reducing its electric bills considerably.

The solar array is expected to generate about a million kilowatt-hours each year. That amount of electricity would power about 138 average Vermont homes. ♻️



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