



Outer Cape Energize

Based on the idea that Climate change does not care about or respect human-made boundaries and the fact that the Outer Cape is composed of four small towns, it was proposed to work regionally on a selected project. Initially, the response was, “why would we do that?” - understandable given that individual towns are actually quite distinct from each other and accustomed to dealing with their own issues. However, with some perseverance an initial exploratory meeting was held in March of 2017 among some energy committee members of the towns of Provincetown, Truro, and Wellfleet and the administration of Eastham (which has no energy committee). We decided to develop an Outer Cape initiative to facilitate solar power installations, reduction of carbon emissions, and to enhance energy conservation in the member towns on the Outer Cape. The name Outer Cape Energize has been utilized to represent the four towns for the purposes of the current program and possibly future programs. We elected to work as a loose group of volunteers rather than form a non-profit organization.

A proposal for funding was submitted to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (Solarize Mass program) for marketing funds and technical assistance. The funding was approved in October of 2017 with \$20,000 in funds available to the program (\$5,000 per town). The Outer Cape Energize Program has been coordinated by a Steering Committee formed of two representatives from the energy committees of Provincetown, Truro, and Wellfleet, a representative from Eastham appointed by the Town Administrator, and several additional invited individuals.

The program has been centered on grassroots outreach and public communication programs driven by volunteer efforts.

The program has had three goals:

- To encourage solar installations for residents and small businesses on the Outer Cape;
- To encourage the adoption of technologies that use green-generated electricity in place of carbon-based fuels;
- To encourage the overall reduction of energy usage through conservation measures (Cape Light Compact energy audits and follow up work)

For the Solar portion estimated savings through Outer Cape Energize have been at least 20 percent.

As a way to promote further carbon reduction, the program focused on the installation of air-source heat pumps, but also provided information about air-source hot water heaters and electric vehicles.

To encourage conservation measures staff from the Cape Light Compact explained their program to provide free home energy audits and incentives to adopt conservation measures.

Program Activities

Since the program began operation in October, 2017, educational Community meetings have been held twice per month, rotating among the four Outer Cape towns.

A Competitive bidding process (including RFP development) with MassCEC was carried out to select a Solar Installer. Six proposals were received. This quite notable compared to the one proposal that Wellfleet received when it participated in the Solarize program in 2013. This is one of several examples of

the value of working collaboratively as a region - the greater potential business for Solar vendors yielded more proposals and lower costs due to the anticipated volume of business. All six proposals passed the State's threshold review and a consulting firm's Technical review. Our program chose the firm that we felt was the best - ACE Solar - with an announcement taking place on 2/8/18. We have been very pleased with the performance of ACE Solar throughout the program.

As part of its proposal, ACE Solar committed to providing the energy from a Solar system at no cost to one or more outer cape non-profits for each 200 KWs of solar power that is installed.

Marketing materials were developed and Ads were placed in the Provincetown Banner, Provincetown Magazine, and Cape Cod Times. Public Radio spots have been airing. We received some good press coverage (Lower Cape TV, the Banner, and Cape Cod Times) A mailing was sent to the non-resident taxpayer's associations of each of the four towns. Property Tax inserts were sent to the residents of three of the towns. We also contacted businesses throughout the Outer Cape through Chambers of Commerce and directly on a one on one basis.

For the Solarize portion of the program, to date we have generated over 300 leads and counting from residences and businesses across the four towns. As of the end of November, 2018 Ninety-eight (98) Solar installation contracts (over 1,900 panels) have been signed to date totaling approximately 700 KWs of electricity. These Solar systems will yield an estimated \$4.2 million in lifetime energy savings.

Solar systems for most residents have a payback period of about five years. This is due to Federal and State tax benefits and the value of Solar credits that are created when production exceeds demand as well as the substantial discount from ACE Solar.

Outer Cape Energize applied for and received permission from Mass CEC to extend the Solarize portion of the program from the original end date of August 8, 2018 to September 7, 2018. The request was made due to ongoing strong interest from the four Outer Cape towns and a very strong surge in interest over the final month. This extension meant that any resident or business owner who signed a solar system contract with ACE Solar by September 7th would receive the same substantial savings that others have received over the course of the program. In addition, while the MassCEC Solarize Mass portion of the program has ended, Outer Cape Energize negotiated with ACE Solar to continue the program pricing with until the end of 2018 with the goal of reaching 800 KWs in order to provide the energy equivalent of four solar systems to one or more Outer Cape nonprofits.

For the energy efficiency and energy conservation portion of our program conducted in partnership with Cape Light Compact, a noticeable uptick in energy audits and follow up work has occurred.

The visibility, educational activity and overall success of Outer Cape Energize has provided additional community support for a project in Wellfleet to install a solar array on the town's capped landfill. This project is under development and was a topic at a Special Town meeting on Monday of this week. We are pleased to announce that all three articles needed to move forward with the project were passed by a unanimous voice vote. We are also working on the concept of a Regional Sustainability Coordinator position for the Outer Cape.

We believe our success at working across all four Outer Cape towns is a process that can be replicated with numerous additional Climate action projects and other areas of shared interest and concern to the towns. The Outer Cape Energize steering committee is working on developing additional project ideas going forward.

Please see our website for more information: outercapeenergize.org

David Mead-Fox - Program Manager of Outer Cape Energize. David is a resident of Wellfleet, a member of the town's Energy Committee and a co-founder of Climate Mobilization Outer Cape. He also serves on the Boards of the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative and Cape Light Compact. In addition, David is a passionate woodworker and believer in the power of democratic principles and citizenship (www.nurturedemocracy.org).

