



Joint Press Release

USDA Rural Development Awards Business Grant to Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development

OLYMPIA, July 11th, 2016 - USDA Rural Development in Washington State has awarded Northwest Sustainable Energy for Economic Development (Northwest SEED) a \$50,000 Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) for the Energize Klickitat program.

“USDA Rural Development’s mission is to facilitate economic opportunity in rural areas,” said Brian Buch, Business and Cooperative Program Director for USDA Rural Development in Washington State. ,” “Having partnerships with entities like Northwest Seed ensures that the expertise is in the community maximizing the impact that sustainable practices can have for Klickitat’s rural small businesses.”

Energize Klickitat will support small and emerging business in Klickitat County through educational trainings and a renewable energy or energy efficiency technology group purchase campaign. Led by Northwest SEED’s Program Coordinator, Jill Eikenhorst, Energize Klickitat will launch this summer.

Energize Klickitat will work with local businesses and citizens to identify the renewable energy or energy efficiency technology that can bring the greatest economic and environmental benefits to the area. Northwest SEED’s past group purchase programs have brought solar panels and efficient heating and cooling systems to communities. Since 2011, Northwest SEED has catalyzed over 900 solar installations in communities through the solar group purchase program Solarize Northwest.

Energize Klickitat’s business development trainings will support job growth, retention, and market expansion in the community. Targeted to local energy efficiency and renewable energy installers, the trainings will walk business owners through unique strategies for marketing and selling renewable energy and energy efficiency technology, and working with a group purchase system. The Greater Goldendale Area Chamber of Commerce will work closely with Energize Klickitat on local outreach and business engagement.

The group purchase campaign will provide citizens with an opportunity to purchase an energy efficiency or renewable energy technology at a discounted rate during a limited time offer. Eikenhorst will lead public education workshops around this group purchase opportunity, and will lead a committee of local volunteers to select one or more local businesses to fulfill the group purchase contracts. Citizens will learn about financing options and incentives, cost savings associated with the technology, and benefits to the long term health of the environment.



“Real, sustainable change results from community members standing together and working towards a common goal,” Eikenhorst said, “When local businesses and citizens participate in one of Northwest SEED’s group purchase campaigns, they demonstrate a commitment to the long term health and well-being of their community and environment. Our last energy efficiency campaign resulted in 38 ductless heat pump installations, which save roughly 133,000 kilowatt hours per year. That is the equivalent of taking 19 cars off the road for one year!”

Citizens and businesses are encouraged to get involved! Energize Klickitat will develop two committees, a Public Outreach Committee, and a Contractor Selection Committee, to assist with the group purchase campaign. If you are interested in bringing clean energy to your community, please visit our website at www.nwseed.org/energize. The schedule for upcoming workshops and Energize Klickitat events will be posted shortly.

To learn more about Energize Klickitat, or get involved with the program, please contact Jill Eikenhorst at jill@nwseed.org or (206) 457-5403.

To learn more about USDA Rural Development, please contact Phil Eggman at (360) 470-9900 or Philip.eggman@wa.usda.gov.

To keep up-to-date with Northwest SEED's programs, please join our conversation online! Connect with us on Facebook, and don't forget to follow Northwest SEED on twitter for additional updates.

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