



Community
Environmental
Council



For Immediate Release

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Local Non-Profits Bring Solar Group Purchasing Discounts to Ojai Valley through “Solarize Ojai Valley”

Solarize Ojai Valley is available from July 9 through October 9

Ojai, CA, July 9, 2013 – In a press conference today, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition (OVGC) and the Community Environmental Council (CEC) announced the launch of “Solarize Ojai Valley”. Solarize Ojai Valley is a community-led, group-purchasing program designed make going solar easier and more affordable for Ojai Valley homeowners.

Through the Solarize Ojai program, local non-profits OVGC and CEC seek to increase the amount of renewable energy in the area and help Valley homeowners save thousands of dollars on electric bills by switching to solar. “By gathering together in this community led effort, Ojai Valley residents will be able to enjoy a discounted price and a streamlined process for going solar,” said Jefferson Litten, CEC’s Solarize Program Coordinator. Litten noted that over 120 homeowners have already switched to solar through CEC’s similar Solarize programs on the Central Coast.

Solarize Ojai Valley will be available for three months – July 9, 2013 through October 9, 2013. During this time, homeowners can switch to solar at a fixed, discounted price from the Ojai-based installation firm, California Solar Electric (CSE). After a rigorous application process, CEC and OVGC vetted and selected CSE based on experience, quality of work and pricing.

County Supervisor Steve Bennett, noted the difficulty in selecting the right contractor for any home improvement project, “Often times the hardest part of the project is making sure that you chose the right contractor. With the Solarize Ojai Valley Program, CEC and OVGC have done all the difficult and time consuming vetting work for you. It is like a neighborly referral program on a community scale.”

At the event, Ojai Mayor Paul Blatz touted the launch of Solarize Ojai. “I sincerely hope that many Valley residents take advantage of this fabulous opportunity to start using solar energy to power their homes.” Blatz added that Ojai Valley’s abundant sunshine and warm summers make it an ideal locale for solar.

Troy and Jeri Becker, the hosts of the event, showcased their solar array to local dignitaries and media at the event. The Beckers have been enjoying the financial and environmental benefits of going solar since late 2004. “Going solar is a great investment, our panels save us \$500 a month and have saved us nearly \$52,000 since we put them up,” said Becker.

“A large component of the Solarize Ojai Valley Program is education,” noted Litten, “Many homeowners don’t know that by switching to a solar lease they can start saving money on day one or that an investment in purchasing solar panels can pay itself off in as little as five years. Once the panels are paid off, homeowners can enjoy at least 20 years of free electricity. Through outreach and educational homeowner workshops, this program seeks to inform Valley residents of the benefits they can see from switching to solar.”

Solarize Ojai Valley will also be the first Solarize program to offer a free energy audit to any homeowner who signs up for the program. This nine-step audit will help homeowners reduce their energy consumption and utility bills through recommendations for energy efficiency and conservation.

With CEC and OVGC acting as liaisons between the installer and local residents, Solarize Ojai Valley offers benefits to local residents by:

- reducing the costs of solar as community group-purchasing programs offer more affordable pricing than an individual purchases,
- simplifying the contractor selection process,
- ensuring quality installation and service,
- and increasing the amount of renewable energy in Ventura County.
- supporting the missions of CEC and OVGC

In order to participate, Solarize Ojai Valley participants must:

- Live within the service territory (Ojai Valley which includes Ojai, Mira Monte, Meiner Oaks, Oak View, Upper Ojai and surrounding unincorporated areas)
- Own a home that is suitable for solar installation
- Sign a contract with the partnered installer between July 9, 2013 and October 9, 2013

To apply for Solarize Ojai Valley, homeowners can go to www.SolarizeOjai.org for the simple, 5-minute application process. Within 48 hours of application, CEC will contact applicants to discuss the process and expectations. Homeowners can also get more information on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/cecsolarize>.

CEC and OVGC will be hosting free introductory workshops where residents can learn about energy efficiency, conservation, and solar energy. Homeowners are strongly encouraged to attend one of the workshops:

| OJAI | OAK VIEW | OJAI |
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| Thursday, July 23 | Thursday, August 15 | Tuesday, September 17 |
| 7:00 – 8:30pm | 6:30 – 8:00pm | 7:00 – 8:30pm |
| Chaparral Auditorium 414 E. Ojai Avenue Ojai 93023 | Oak View Park & Resource Center 555 Mahoney Avenue Oak View 93022 | Ojai Valley Grange Hall 381 Cruzero Street Ojai 93023 |

In addition to getting a discounted price for solar power, Solarize Ojai Valley participants will be helping to support OVGC’s and CEC’s missions. Included in the purchase price is a small one-time fee (\$0.20 per installed watt) paid by California Solar Electric directly to OVGC and CEC. This fee will help both

organizations continue to promote renewable energy in the Central Coast region and be self-sustaining, with no additional cost to the homeowner.

About the Ojai Valley Green Coalition

The Ojai Valley Green Coalition is a gathering of residents and friends of the Ojai Valley actively working together to create an environmentally sustainable community in Ojai. In the spirit of "think globally, act locally," OVGC seeks to educate the community about ecological issues, to promote sustainable practices to our local businesses and organizations, and to advocate environmental responsibility as a priority to our elected officials. Find OVGC on the web at www.ojavalleygreencoalition.com or by phone 805-669-8445.

About the Community Environmental Council

Since 1970, the Community Environmental Council (CEC) has led the Santa Barbara region – and at times California and the nation – in creative solutions to some of the toughest environmental problems. Today CEC is focused on moving the Central Coast region away from dependence on fossil fuels in one generation. Find CEC on the web at www.cecsb.org on Twitter @CECSB and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CECSB> .

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