



Needham Solar Challenge exceeds original fund raising goal by nearly 70%!



With donations already received from 253 local residents and businesses, only 47 more donors are needed to earn a 2nd solar panel.

An overwhelmingly positive response to the Needham Solar Challenge puts the town only 47 donors away from earning not one, but two solar panels. With donations in from two hundred and fifty-three local residents and businesses Needham has already secured its first 2 kW solar array. This solar panel will be installed on the roof of the Pollard Middle School. If the new Solar Challenge goal is met by June 30th, Needham can earn a second 2 kW array. Additional funds raised will go into a special community energy fund to be used for future projects.

“We couldn’t believe the outpouring of support for this community-wide renewable energy project., said Susan McGarvey, President of the League of Women Voters of Needham, “ We are thrilled to be so close to earning a 2nd solar panel.”

The Solar Challenge is being led by the League’s Climate Action Committee, chaired by Eleanor Rosellini, in partnership with the Green Needham Collaborative. The original deadline for the Solar Challenge, April 30th, was recently extended to June 30th. This new date is enabling Needham to seek additional donors—and a 2nd solar array.

Earlier this spring Needham residents and businesses were encouraged to donate to the New England Wind Fund as part of the “Community Solar Challenge”. The program gives cities and towns the chance to earn a 2 kW solar array by getting local donors to contribute at least \$100, or \$5 per month, to the New England Wind Fund. The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, a quasi-public state agency that promotes clean energy, matches donations dollar for dollar into an energy fund for Needham. That fund can be used for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects within the town. Communities achieving their solar challenge goals receive additional funding from the MTC to complete acquisition and installation of the solar panels.

Outreach to the community to support the solar challenge has been extensive and included participation by students from the Pollard Environmental Action Team and the Needham High School Environmental Club. One enthusiastic Needham High student, Kyra Schapiro, even sold custom deliveries of Hershey Kisses to students’ sweethearts on Valentine’s Day, in an effort to raise funds for the challenge.

“We have invested significant effort into raising people’s awareness of renewable energy as a viable source of local power to help address soaring energy costs,” said Michael Greis, Co-Founder of the Green Needham Collaborative. “The solar challenge has been a tremendous vehicle for that message.”

The Climate Action Committee and the Green Needham Collaborative are setting a new goal of raising an additional 100 donations between now and June 30th. If the new goal of 350 contributors is met, Needham will not only earn two solar arrays but will also generate enough matching funds to pursue other innovative energy projects here in Needham.

Contact: **Michael Greis**, mgreis@comcast.net, 781 559-4623. For more information on:
- the **Solar Challenge**, and to contribute, go to: www.NewEnglandWind.org/Needham
- **Green Needham Collaborative**, go to wiki.greenneedham.org.
- **Needham League of Women Voters**, go to www.lwv-needham.org.