



## Permitting, Inspection, and Planning for Solar PV in Montana

I am writing to invite you and your fellow City and County staff from permitting, inspection, and planning departments to come learn about simplified solar permitting, planning and zoning best practices, and other topics that will help streamline solar installations in your community. This free workshop is open to current SolSmart participants as well as prospective SolSmart communities. Attendance qualifies SolSmart communities for several advanced criteria towards Silver and Gold designation. The SolSmart designation aims to streamline solar energy to increase economic development by building a local source of energy, commerce and jobs.

As noted in the agenda below, workshop components are designed for attendance by staff from specific departments. This is important for communities seeking certain SolSmart criteria. Please see the notes below for more information.

### Time and Place

Monday, August 28<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:30a and on Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:30a. The training will take place online, *via two webinars*.

The workshop is designed to be interactive, and the presenters will encourage active participation throughout the presentations. Attendees are encouraged to view the webinar together, in a conference room or other meeting space that would allow for discussion amongst staff and with the presenters.

### Presenters

Bill Brooks (Brooks Engineering), Megan Day, AICP (National Renewable Energy Laboratory - NREL), Amy Hollander (National Renewable Energy Laboratory - NREL), Andrew Valainis (Montana Renewable Energy Association - MREA)

### Agenda *(All times listed are in Mountain Time)*

<b>Monday August 28<sup>th</sup> – Permitting for Solar in Montana</b>	
SolSmart Introduction, Solar Landing Page and Permitting Check List – for Inspection and Permitting staff. (Amy Hollander, NREL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SolSmart Introduction</li> <li>• Why simplified permitting</li> <li>• Your solar landing page and permitting check list</li> <li>• Permitting applications and turnaround times</li> <li>• Inspection Reduction</li> </ul>	<i>9:30-10a</i>
Solar Permitting – for Permitting staff only. (Bill Brooks, Brooks Engineering) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines, Laws, Codes,</li> <li>• Permitting Eligibility Check List</li> <li>• Central/String Inverter Standard Plans</li> <li>• Micro Inverter Standard Plans</li> <li>• Structural Criteria for Residential Rooftop Solar</li> <li>• Permitting applications and turnaround times</li> <li>• Streamlined versus Standard Permitting</li> </ul>	<i>10-11:30a</i>



<b>Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup> – Planning and Zoning for Solar in Montana</b>	
SolSmart Introduction, Solar Landing Page and Permitting Check List – for Planning and Zoning staff. (Amy Hollander, NREL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SolSmart Introduction</li> <li>• Why simplified permitting</li> <li>• Your solar landing page and permitting check list</li> <li>• Permitting applications and turnaround times</li> <li>• Inspection Reduction</li> </ul>	<i>9:30-10a</i>
Planning and Zoning for Solar in your Community in Montana – for Planning and Zoning staff. (Megan Day, NREL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removing barriers to solar in your zoning code</li> <li>• Establishing appropriate zoning and land use pathways for large-scale solar</li> </ul>	<i>10-11:30a</i>

**Registration**

Please have all staff who plan to attend register for the webinar, even though multiple staff may view the webinar together.

[Register for Monday’s Permitting and Inspection for Solar in Montana session.](#)

[Register for Tuesday’s Planning and Zoning for Solar in Montana session.](#)

**SolSmart Criteria**

Communities that attend the course will have fulfilled the following SolSmart criteria:

- **I-1:** Provide cross-training of inspection and permitting staff on solar PV via in-person or online resources. Training must have occurred within the past five years. (Required for Silver and Gold).
- **P-8:** Train permitting staff on best practices for permitting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred within the past five years.
- **PZD-9:** Train planning staff on best practices in planning and zoning for solar PV. Training must have occurred within the past five years.
- Potentially other criteria if best practices highlighted during workshop are *adopted*.



## About the presenters



**Bill Brooks, PE**, is Principal of [Brooks Engineering](#) and has nearly 30 years of experience designing, installing, and evaluating grid-connected PV systems. He has written numerous technical manuals and articles for the PV industry that are widely used throughout the United States and beyond. He was the lead technical advisor developing the IAEI PV Online Training for Code Officials (PVOT). His publications include the *Expedited Permit Process for PV Systems*, the *Field Inspection Guidelines for PV Systems*, and *Understanding the CalFire Solar PV Installation Guidelines*. Mr. Brooks is an active participant on many national and international codes and standards panels including UL1703 (PV Modules), UL1741 (Inverters), and UL2703 (Mounting Systems) Standards Technical Panels. He represents the Photovoltaic Industry Code Council on Code Making Panel 4 of the National Electrical Code (NEC). He recently chaired the NFPA Article 690 Solar Photovoltaic Systems, Article 691-Large-Scale PV Electric Supply Stations, and Firefighter Safety Task Groups for the NEC.



**Megan Day** of the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory \(NREL\)](#) leads research, analysis, and technical assistance on municipal energy planning and policy, utility-scale photovoltaic development, and integrating solar in local land use and zoning codes. She manages the Cities Leading through Energy Analysis and Planning (Cities-LEAP) project, which provides localized energy data and analysis for every U.S. city to enable more strategic energy decisions. Her previous experience includes utility-scale PV development, conducting a community emissions inventory for a municipality and leading a climate action planning process, and serving as the director of a nonprofit.



**Amy Hollander** joined the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory \(NREL\)](#) in 2010 as a Project Lead III and currently is working on solar access and solar soft costs, with a focus on low-income populations and solar policy. Ms. Hollander also works with the SolSmart project, Solar Market Pathways, University Technical Assistance and the Distributed Energy Integration Collaborative (DGIC). Ms. Hollander has also provided project management and technical assistance for the DOE Home Energy Upgrades Professionals project, the DOE office of Indian Energy, the Clean Energy Solutions Center, and other NREL projects. Since graduating from the University of Colorado she has worked in weatherization and energy efficiency for over 26 years, first by building a large weatherization agency in Colorado, then through state and local sustainability efforts.



**Andrew Valainis** is Executive Director of the [Montana Renewable Energy Association \(MREA\)](#). He was born and raised in Rhode Island, and graduated from the University of Rhode Island's International Engineering Program with degrees in Ocean Engineering and Spanish. His Senior Design Project was the siting and design of a utility scale offshore windfarm in Rhode Island coastal waters. As part of his degree, Andrew spent a year living in Spain, including a 5-month internship with a renewable energy firm doing research and development on wind turbine technologies. In 2011, Andrew moved to Montana as part of the EnergyCorps AmeriCorps program. He completed two service terms, the first in Butte with the National Center for Appropriate Technology conducting energy efficiency and renewable energy outreach programs, and the second in Missoula helping the City produce its Conservation and Climate Action Plan. Prior to joining MREA, Andrew worked as Operations Manager for Climate Ride, a Montana based non-profit that organizes charitable cycling and hiking events.