



Pikes Peak Regional Building Agency Earns Honor for Solar Friendly Policies

All Colorado's biggest communities are now on board with policies that streamline solar

COLORADO SPRINGS, Oct. 22 2013 -- The Pikes Peak Regional Building Department has earned Silver Level certification through the Solar Friendly Communities program for adopting best practices in solar permitting. The regional agency, which oversees building regulations for El Paso County, Colorado Springs and the smaller cities of Fountain, Manitou Springs, Green Mountain Falls, Monument and Palmer Lake will be recognized at the October 23 Building Commission meeting.

With the addition of Colorado Springs, all of Colorado's five biggest cities - and many smaller ones - have now streamlined their processes enough to win recognition through the program. A road sign and a plaque will be presented to officials in a ceremony during the public comment of the Building Commission meeting, which begins at 3 p.m. at PPRBD headquarters in Colorado Springs.

Solar Friendly Communities works to encourage best practices in solar permitting, inspection and finance as part of the U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot initiative to drive down the costs of solar energy. The program uses an easy-to-follow roadmap of 12 Best Practices (explained in detail at www.solarcommunities.org) and rewards communities for endorsing these practices through points for various steps.

"During the two year period when the elements of earth, air, fire and water have demonstrated their destructive powers throughout our region, it is refreshing to know that the PPRBD is helping property owners to harness the positive power of the sun," said Coreen Toll, a member of the Manitou Springs City Council who represents that city on the PPRBD advisory committee. "This kind of streamlined permitting for the installation of solar energy technology facilitates our ability to move away from polluting fossil fuels towards more renewable sources of energy. Thanks, Regional Building for this breath of fresh air!"

The Pikes Peak Regional Building Department becomes the 11th jurisdiction to be recognized, and the first in southern Colorado. The Pikes Peak region joins the City and County of Denver, Aurora, Lakewood, Fort Collins, Arvada, Boulder County, Nederland, Carbondale, Parker and Lafayette in earning Solar Friendly Communities certification.

Pikes Peak Regional Building Department stated that "it is honored to be the latest community to qualify and be added to the list of Solar Friendly Communities." Pikes Peak Regional Building Department added that it appreciates the hard work of the Solar Friendly Communities team in establishing and maintaining this program, which benefits

the entire state. Pikes Peak Regional Building Department is also proud of its own staff, who work diligently in administering the provisions of the International Energy Code, which not only leads to Code compliance, but also an unencumbered process for permits and inspections for the citizens throughout the Pikes Peak Region.

PPRBD earned enough points in the program to qualify for Silver Level Recognition. The agency has adopted solar permitting best practices such as providing a checklist of requirements for both solar PV and solar thermal systems, using standard forms and allowing for electronic permitting.

"We are delighted that the Pikes Peak Region is joining the Solar Friendly Communities program by working to streamline its process for permitting rooftop solar energy systems," said Rebecca Cantwell, senior program director for Solar Friendly Communities. "The recognition demonstrates that the department is making it easier, faster and more affordable for residents of Colorado Springs and other parts of El Paso County to go solar."

While the costs of solar panels have dropped dramatically in recent years, the "soft costs" of solar such as permitting and inspection now account for roughly half of the total price of a typical residential system. By adopting policies that cut the time required to get rooftop solar systems installed, PPRBD is helping to cut the cost of the systems and making solar more affordable. With interest in solar growing, the streamlined processes will also help the region prepare for greater solar energy demand.

Solar Friendly Communities was created by the Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association through a SunShot grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. Other partners include the City and County of Denver, Fort Collins, Golden, Boulder County, the Rocky Mountain Institute and the American Solar Energy Society.

Contact information: Rebecca Cantwell - Solar Friendly Communities
303.333.7342 rcantwell@coseia.org SolarCommunties.org

