

**Contact:** Scott R. Tess  
**Phone:** 217-384-2381  
**Email:** [srtess@urbanaininois.us](mailto:srtess@urbanaininois.us)

**For Immediate Release**



“This 9.80 kW array was installed on Chris Tessum’s residential property in Urbana, IL as part of the 2021 Solar Urbana-Champaign Program. In the first year of this installation, the Tessum family can expect to save approx. \$1,436 on their utility bill. Photo courtesy of New Prairie Solar.”

## **Solar Urbana-Champaign Group Buy Program Ends; 16 Solar Arrays To Be Added**

Bulk Purchase Program Helps New Solar Buyers Learn and Save Together

**Urbana, IL**— The 2021 Solar Urbana-Champaign program has closed with a total of 16 properties in Champaign, Piatt, and Vermilion Counties getting clean solar energy for their homes and properties. Additionally, 52 properties were able to receive free site assessments/cost estimates to learn if solar was right for them and their property through the program.

Solar Urbana-Champaign powered by Grow Solar, an initiative of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), helps make navigating the solar market more affordable for individuals with its limited-time group buy discount program. The program is built on the belief that communities are stronger when they're composed of informed citizens and that it's important for each individual to have a strong foundation of understanding about the technologies available to them in order to make decisions about their energy future.

"We're trying to simplify the process of going solar," said Peter Murphy, MREA Solar Program Director. "It can seem complicated, so we present clear information and answer folks' questions at our Solar Power Hours and then they can determine for themselves whether solar is right for them."

One previous participant, Andy Robinson said, "I've thought solar was a cool way to reduce our carbon footprint ever since seeing the 2007 UI solar decathlon house in DC, but it also needed to make financial sense for our family. Now we offset nearly all of our electric use and it was a good financial investment. New Prairie Solar laid out the panels on the front and back roof in a way that looks like it is a part of the design of our 1920 house. We were especially happy to meet the diverse install crew of local women and men, and a highly qualified refugee. On the first day of solar production, our kids said that we were vacuuming with sunshine, and they are right."

Going on its sixth year in the community, Solar Urbana-Champaign kicked off in July and provided free, one-hour long educational sessions for members of the public. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, these "Solar Power Hours" were scheduled virtually to provide prospective participants with information about how solar energy works.

"The economic benefit of solar mirrors the economic benefit of owning one's home," said Murphy. "With solar, you own the means of producing your electricity. Without solar, you're essentially renting your electricity."

Despite the uncertainty that continued after 2020, the program persisted and reached 120.12 kW of contracted solar, resulting in average savings of around \$150 per household for an average size solar installation, on top of lower than market rate pricing as a result of the competitive request for proposals process.

Since 2016, Solar Urbana-Champaign powered by Grow Solar, has helped 242 residents go solar and has educated over 1,292 Solar Power Hour attendees. Solar Urbana-Champaign is grateful for the hard work of all of the local organizations and municipalities it has been supported by all these years. Stay tuned for a future and new program twist for 2022!

To learn more about Solar Urbana-Champaign, please visit: [www.solarurbanachampaign.com](http://www.solarurbanachampaign.com)

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*The MREA was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit shortly after the first [Energy Fair](#) in 1990. MREA's mission is to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call [715-592-6595](tel:715-592-6595) or visit [www.midwestrenew.org](http://www.midwestrenew.org).*

**Additional resources including photos and program logos available for download at: [Solar Urbana-Champaign Media](#)**