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## State Announces 7 New Communities for Solarize RI *Expansion of Solarize RI to Reach More Homeowners, Businesses*

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Providence, R.I., – Representatives from the Office of Energy Resources (OER), the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation and SmartPower joined with municipal leaders today to announce the communities that will participate in the next phase of Solarize Rhode Island. Barrington, Foster, Middletown, Newport, Portsmouth, South Kingstown, and Warwick were selected through a request for application process. The Aquidneck Island Planning Commission submitted a joint application on behalf of Middletown, Newport and Portsmouth.

“I am pleased to see more municipalities embracing solar as a way to reduce energy costs and protect our environment,” Governor Gina M. Raimondo said. “This is another example of our state taking action to reduce long-term energy costs and preserve the environment, while creating growth opportunities for Rhode Island workers and businesses. As we work to spark a comeback in Rhode Island, we will continue to collaborate across the public and private sector to reduce energy costs, shrink our carbon footprint, and make it easier to do business in Rhode Island.”

Solarize Rhode Island seeks to increase the adoption of small-scale solar electricity in participating communities through a competitive tiered pricing structure that increases the savings for everyone as more home and business owners sign contracts. Now in its second year, Solarize Rhode Island, a partnership between the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), the Commerce Corporation, and SmartPower, has led to more than 150 residents and business owners signing contracts for small-scale solar electricity systems, while educating hundreds more about the economic and environmental benefits of solar electricity, energy efficiency and other clean energy technologies.

“It is great to see so many municipalities interested in Solarize Rhode Island,” said State Energy Commissioner Marion Gold. “This community-based renewable energy program can help local consumers save money on their utility bills and reduce net energy consumption from the grid. The Solarize Rhode Island program serves as a perfect example of strategic partnerships that can drive local economic growth opportunities, reduce energy costs, and advance important environmental goals.”

“It is encouraging to see more Rhode Island communities embrace the Solarize Rhode Island program while we, as a state, work to reduce energy costs,” said Rhode Island Commerce Corporation President and Chief Operating Officer Darin Early. “Programs providing cost

reductions to businesses and residents is one tool we are using to reduce energy costs and promote growth in the green and technology sectors.”

“The Ocean State is on the verge of becoming ‘the Solar State’,” said Brian F. Keane, President of SmartPower. “With the launching of this next phase of Solarize, Rhode Island is now poised to become a national leader of solar energy. Indeed, if you’ve ever thought about buying solar, it’s never been easier and more affordable than it is today in Rhode Island.”

“As participants in Solarize Rhode Island program, we look forward to learning and collaborating with SmartPower, The Office of Energy Resources, and Commerce RI to bring our residential and commercial properties the information they need to make sound decisions about clean energy and energy efficiency,” Warwick Mayor Scott Avedisian said. “We have already begun the process of making better and safer decisions when it comes to the environmental impact, and look forward to discovering all benefits of solar energy.”

“This is truly an exciting proposal for Aquidneck Island and we look forward to working with our partners at Aquidneck Island Planning Commission and the City of Newport’s Energy and Environment Commission members as well as all the other participants in this innovative project,” Newport Mayor Jeanne-Marie Napolitano said.

The first two highly successful phases of Solarize included North Smithfield, Tiverton and Little Compton and contributed to the growing interest in the solar market. Solarize North Smithfield drew substantial interest from the community, with 84 contracts signed to install 623 kilowatts. The recent Solarize Tiverton and Little Compton campaigns saw the towns collectively double their solar installations.

### **About Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources**

The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) is the lead state agency on energy policy and programs. OER’s mission is to lead Rhode Island to a secure, cost-effective, and sustainable energy future. OER works closely with private and public stakeholders to increase the reliability and security of our energy supply, reduce energy costs and mitigate price volatility, and improve environmental quality. [www.energy.ri.gov](http://www.energy.ri.gov)

### **About Rhode Island Commerce Corporation**

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation is the official economic development organization for the state of Rhode Island. The Commerce Corporation’s mission is to work with public, private and non-profit partners to create the conditions for businesses in all sectors to thrive and to improve the quality of life for our citizens by promoting the state’s long-term economic health and prosperity. The corporation manages the state’s Renewable Energy Fund, which provides grants and loans for renewable energy projects with the potential to make electricity in a cleaner, more sustainable manner, while stimulating job growth in the green technology and energy sectors of Rhode Island’s economy. [www.commercerci.com](http://www.commercerci.com)

### **About SmartPower**

SmartPower is the nation's leading non-profit social marketing firm dedicated to promoting clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Named the "Best Non-profit Marketing Firm in the US", SmartPower's mission is to help Americans make smart energy choices by creating on-the-ground campaigns that engage the public and generate measurable energy actions.

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