# SOLARIZE TRI-LAKES

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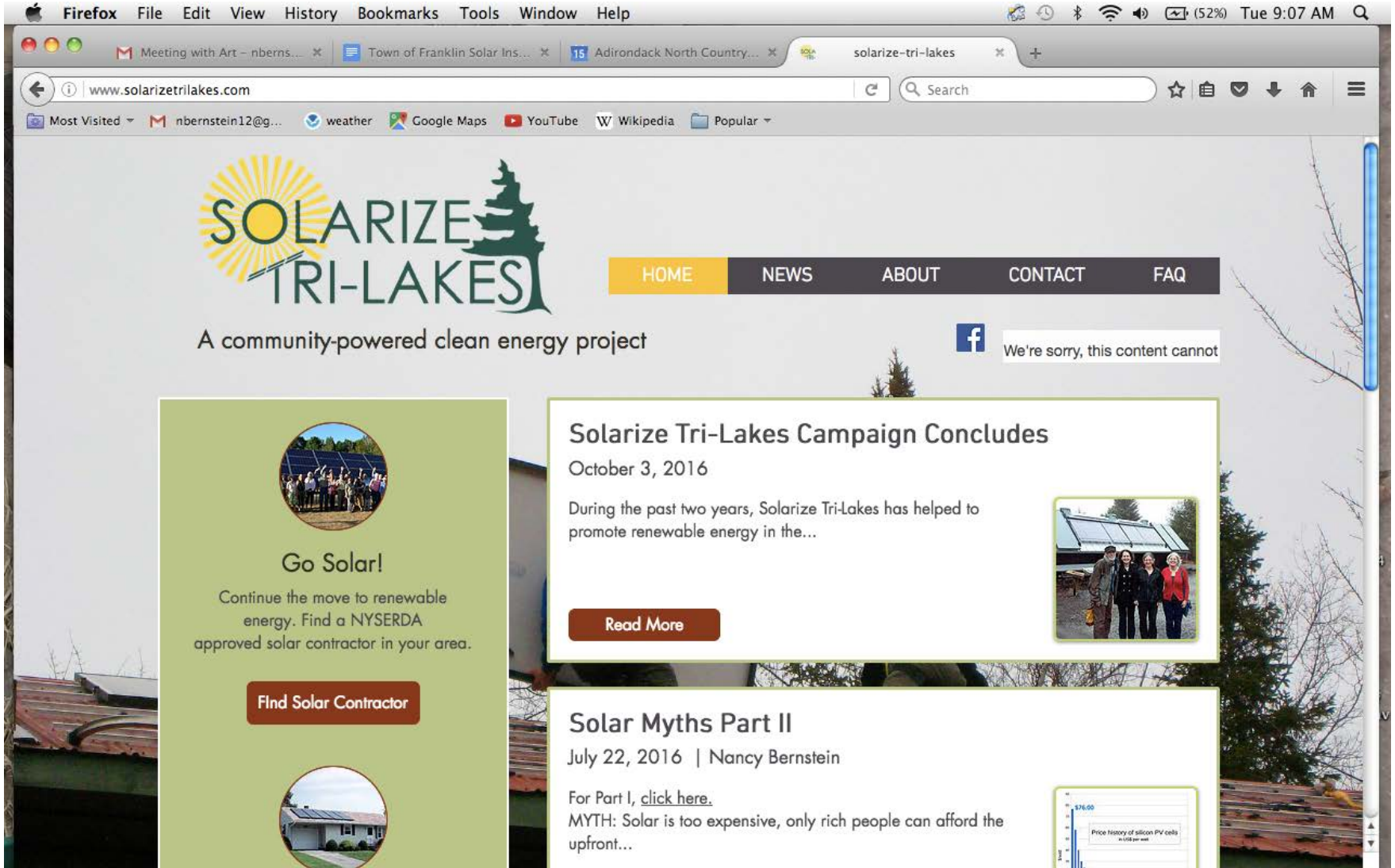

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## 'Solarize' Campaigns target North Country

### Gov. Cuomo applauds North Country for blazing the sustainable energy trail

SARANAC LAKE — The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) is spearheading "Solarize" campaigns targeting several North Country communities as part of New York State's solar initiative. The City of Ogdensburg and communities along the "Adirondack Coast" are joining the Village of Canton and the Tri-Lakes in taking advantage of simplified purchasing and price discounts available through the program.

In a press release announcing the second round of funding for the program, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo applauded the progress New York communities have made in adding solar capacity. In 2015, 26 communities utilized the technical and marketing support made available through the initiative to undertake 900 solar projects across New York.

"We were so impressed with the turnout from North Country businesses and residents in the Tri-Lakes, Canton and Akwesasne for the first round of Solarize, said ANCA Executive Director Kate Fish. "Communities participating in the first round completed nearly 100 installations and added 550KW of clean electricity to the grid. We look forward to building on this momentum through our partnerships with these new communities in 2016 to bring even more solar to the St Lawrence and Champlain Valleys."

According to the Governor's release, New York's Solarize initiative was launched in December 2014 as a collaboration between the State and local communities. Communities engaged in Solarize campaigns are able to simplify purchasing and obtain discounts for participants on solar projects. The "Solarize" initiative partners with interested residential and business communities to conduct joint purchasing agreements that help lower solar acquisition and consumer costs.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)provided a total of $365,000 in technical and marketing support for the 2015 Solarize campaigns. These campaigns saved participants a total of approximately $1.4 million on upfront purchase costs for solar, for an average of approximately $1,590 per residential or business project. Campaigns are managed by community partnerships that include local municipalities, planning organizations, sustainability groups, state legislators and business groups.

"The City of Ogdensburg and the Greater Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerc
commitment to solar b
burg project with ANC
and businesses," says L
Commerce Executive

"I am a believer in a
Councilman Jerry Del
voltaic energy far exce
interested in Solar sho
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This second round c
NYSERDA under Gov
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## Round 2 of Solarize campaign expected in area

PHOTO PROVIDED

Crews work on one of two solar arrays that Shir Filler and Bruce Young had installed last year on their Vermontville home through the Solarize Tri-Lakes campaign. Filler said incentives and rebates enabled them to save about half the cost of the installations, and they have already significantly reduced their electric bills.

## Plans call for solar power initiatives in Plattsburgh, Tri-Lakes area

Daily Enterprise • adirondackdailyenterprise.com • Saturday, July 9, 2016

# Opinion

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## Solar myths, part I

Guest Commentary
By Nancy Bernstein
Solarize Tri-Lakes

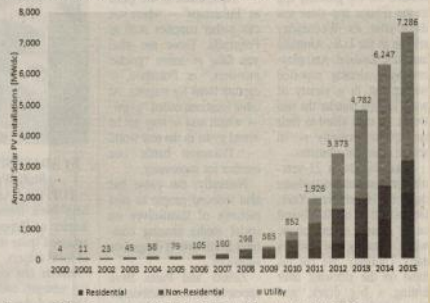
Solarize Tri-Lakes is a group of volunteers raising awareness about the benefits of installing solar or photovoltaic electricity (PV). With solar technology changing so rapidly, it can be difficult to tell the difference between truth and common misconceptions. Here is our attempt to debunk some of these myths.

MYTH: New York doesn't get enough sun for solar.
FACT: Solar irradiation levels vary across the U.S., but every state receives enough sunlight to make solar a good investment. Consider that Germany leads the world in residential solar — six times the installed capacity of the U.S. — with a solar resource roughly equivalent to that of Alaska. Solar can work in almost any climate as long as panels are properly installed in an unshaded location and at the proper tilt and orientation. They are actually MORE efficient at cooler temperatures than hot ones.

MYTH: The North Country gets too much snow for solar.
FACT: Solar panels will not produce electricity while covered with snow; however, snow days will be factored into the size of your system. A large percentage of a North Country home's annual solar production happens during the longer, sunnier days of spring, summer and fall. Since snow slides off easily once the sun is shining, it is not necessary to climb on your roof to clear your panels after a snowfall.

MYTH: Solar panels will be a good backup if the power goes out.
FACT: Grid-tied solar tends to be the most convenient for homeowners and is the only form eligible for New York State Energy Research and Development Authority rebates. During a power outage, electricity produced

FIGURE: U.S. Solar PV Installations, 2000-2015




Source: GTM Research / SEIA U.S. Solar Market Insight report

ic systems may also be installed on roofs with east-west exposure, or on the ground. Ground-mount systems are relatively compact and can be installed on any flat, un-shaded area within the same property of the house or business. Ground-mount racking and ditching for electric wires require additional cost.

MYTH: Solar panels will make my roof leak.
FACT: Individual solar panels are mounted to aluminum racks, not directly to a roof. Depending on the type of roof, different racking is utilized, but all are designed to attach to the roof securely and prevent leaking. Installers will assess a roof for structural integrity (solar panels and mounting equipment weigh approximately 3 pounds per square foot) and may refuse to mount an array on a roof needing replacement. Any roof repair required to install a solar array is eligible for both federal and state renewable energy tax credits.

MYTH: Solar is only for environmentalists.
FACT: Solar is for everyone! Solar has environmental benefits, but it can also help homeowners and businesses save money and ensure energy security. The U.S. military is adopting solar power at home and abroad: Solar arrays and mobile solar kits help keep soldiers safe in areas where transporting fuel to remote locations can be both costly and dangerous. Iconic American brands are among the biggest adopters of commercial solar: Walmart, Costco, Toys R Us and Crayola are all installing solar and enjoying the benefits of renewable electricity.

> One of the biggest advantages of solar is that it is simple, reliable and maintenance-

MYTH: Solar system cost is based on a home's size.
FACT: Solar systems are custom-designed with particular attention paid to the home's roof orientation and slope, as well as any shading from trees

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## Local solar push shines

Ben Sopczyk of Apex Solar Power, right, and David Filsinger watch from below as Apex techician Josh Seamans measures Filsinger's roof for a solar panel array.
(Enterprise photos — Chris Knight)

## 15 solar panel contracts so far, the most of North Country Solarize programs

By CHRIS KNIGHT
Senior Staff Writer

BLOOMINGDALE — It's the right thing to do environmentally, and now it makes financial sense, too.

That's why David Filsinger and Susan Nolde have signed on to the Solarize the Tri-Lakes campaign. The Bloomingdale couple is working with Queensbury-based Apex Solar Power to have a 10-panel solar array installed on the roof of their house.

"We've been looking at this for a long time, but since the state has come on board with these tax credits and incentives, it's a no-brainer," Filsinger said.

A partnership between the Adirondack North Country Association and the town of Franklin, the Solarize the Tri-Lakes program is part of a statewide effort to make solar power more affordable by pooling together groups of potential solar customers, both residential and commercial, so they can get a cheaper rate. ANCA is also spearheading similar campaigns based in Canton and Akwesasne.

Apex Solar Power is the selected installer for the program, and it has had "quite a bit of interest" so far in the Tri-Lakes, according to the company's marketing director, Ben Sopczyk.

> 'The whole solar revolution has been around forever, but now I think it's finally going to take place. It's going to go mainstream.'
>
> *David Filsinger*

"In this region, we have 15 contracts signed," he said. "That includes people we're doing site visits for or getting ready to install for. We have over 80 people who've inquired. The Tri-Lakes has been the most successful of the North Country Solarize programs so far."

Sopczyk spoke with the Enterprise last week as Apex technician Josh Seamans performed a site visit at Filsinger and Nolde's house, located at the top of a hill off of River Road. Seamans inspected their service panel and took measurements on their roof to determine where the panels would be located and how much solar exposure the system would have.

Going solar seems like a natural progression for Filsinger and Nolde, an environmentally minded-couple who already have a solar-powered hot-water system in their home. Installed five years ago, it covers most of their hot water use, although they have a high-efficiency propane boiler they can use as a backup.

"We've also experimented with

(Continued on Page A8)

Josh Seamans, a technician with Apex Solar Power, opens up the panel box in David Filsinger and Susan Nolde's home in Bloomingdale.

# Campaign Outcome

- Communities involved = 11 Towns and 3 Villages in 2 Counties
- Leads generated = 538
- Contracts signed = 92
- Kilowatts of solar contracted = 673 kw
- Systems installed by direct purchase = 63
- Projects using Affordable Solar Incentive = 1

coffee
house