



Tom Barrett  
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Solar Group Buy Program Proves a Success *Milwaukee Shines expands group buy initiative to more neighborhoods*

Milwaukee – A record number of solar installations are hitting Milwaukee’s rooftops this summer. The City’s solar program, Milwaukee Shines, has helped make solar a viable option for residents. More than 35 homeowners are adding solar to their homes this summer as part of neighborhood group buy programs. And now, because of this success Milwaukee Shines is expanding the program to Washington Heights and Layton Boulevard West neighborhoods.

Milwaukee Shines’ Neighborhood Solar Group Buy program works within neighborhoods to help residents buy solar panels in bulk in order to lower the cost. “We’re using the power of buying in bulk to lower the cost for the homeowner,” said Sustainability and Solar Program Manager Amy Heart. “Solar is a viable option in Milwaukee, and this program helps residents learn about the technology and connect with financing solutions to make it a reality for their home or business,” said Heart.

This summer, Solar Bay View helped 35 homeowners install solar. This beats the record 30 installs in the entire City in 2013. Solar Bay View’s success builds on last fall’s pilot project, Solar Riverwest, which helped 17 homeowners, invest in solar power. The new group purchase programs in Washington Heights and Layton Blvd West launch in August and will last through 2014. The solar group buy programs are open to anyone in the Milwaukee area. “I hope Milwaukee homeowners take advantage of the program in order to reduce energy bill costs,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “I can see the positive effects it will have on our City as a whole, and I look forward to see the program’s continued success in the next year.”

Milwaukee's Neighborhood Group Buy program is a partnership between Milwaukee Shines, the Midwest Renewable Energy Association and Riverwest Cooperative Alliance. "This partnership is essential to provide quality education and outreach within neighborhoods, and to provide information on financing solutions to make solar a reality," said Heart.

"I'm excited to see the Milwaukee homeowners partake in this program," said Elizabeth Hittman, the Midwest Renewable Energy Association Milwaukee Director. "It really is a win-win situation, and the success of the program reassures the passion Milwaukee has for building a clean energy future.

"The program is a unique partnership that demonstrates how people power and working cooperatively can accomplish meaningful and practical goals, like energy independence," said Peter Murphy, of Riverwest Cooperative Alliance.

With the Solar Group Buy program, homeowners are able to lower the initial cost of the solar panels, making a return on investment generally less than 10 years after the installation. After the return on investment, solar panels generate free, clean power for the homeowner.

Milwaukee Shines is a program of the City of Milwaukee's Office of Environmental Sustainability to help increase the investment in solar energy in Milwaukee. For more information, visit [www.MilwaukeeShines.com](http://www.MilwaukeeShines.com).