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CITY OF NAPERVILLE HONORED IN SPECIAL CEREMONY FOR EARNING COVETED SOLAR DESIGNATION

Illinois Now Home to More Communities Earning the Distinction Than Any Other State

NAPERVILLE, IL – In a ceremony packed with local, state and national officials, other leaders, and VIPs, the City of Naperville received an award May 9 at Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont for earning the highly-coveted SolSmart Silver Designation. This important achievement furthers solar power growth in the community with resulting new job creation, economic development and reduced carbon emissions. Twenty-two other communities were similarly honored.

The communities “did an exceptional job, working tirelessly in a multitude of ways to earn their designations,” said Geneva, Ill. Mayor Kevin Burns, who chairs the [Metropolitan Mayors Caucus](#) Environment Committee. “In addition, their staffs collaborated with counterparts at other municipalities to share resources and provide advice, assisting each other in their quests to achieve SolSmart designation.”

The Caucus served as a SolSmart Advisor to 20 communities and was the chief catalyst in the communities’ drive to seek designation.

SolSmart is a national program designed to recognize communities that have taken key steps to foster the growth of mature local solar markets. Communities that meet the official criteria are designated SolSmart Gold, Silver, or Bronze. SolSmart is led by [The Solar Foundation](#) and the [International City/County Management Association](#), and funded by the [U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office](#).

To achieve Silver designation, Naperville earned at least 100 points for adopting solar best practices across [eight categories](#) of strategic SolSmart activities. These include updating ordinances to allow solar development in the community more broadly, and training inspection staff on best practices for permitting and inspecting solar systems.

For transparency and efficiency, Naperville also created a very important solar installation permitting checklist, and posted it on the community’s website. This not only allows local residents to see the process, but helps those applying for a solar permit to produce the necessary forms far more easily, completely, and quickly.

With the 23 new designations, Illinois shot past California and Colorado as the state with the most communities that have earned the SolSmart distinction. Indeed, the Chicago region’s solar growth has been striking. The area was the top metro for solar jobs growth in the nation last year, with

1,180 jobs added in 2018 for a total of 4,275 jobs, according to The Solar Foundation's [National Solar Jobs Census 2018](#).

One reason for the Chicago area's boost is the Greenest Region Compact (GRC), developed by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. This unique document guides municipal sustainability planning and unifies environmental action, regionally, through community collaboration. Its energy goals include advancing renewable energy and enacting policies to support clean energy. Naperville, like nearly all the SolSmart designated communities, signed onto the GRC.

"Each community awarded SolSmart designation deserves their business owners' and other citizens' appreciation for providing clean, solar energy options, and advancing the Greenest Region Compact's commitment to enhanced sustainability," Mayor Burns says.

Lesley McCain of the Illinois Solar Energy Association added, "The GRC in partnership with SolSmart has been instrumental in deepening the towns' understanding of what solar can do – the jobs and environmental benefits," she said. "We saw that towns did not have robust processes for permitting or allowances for solar. A lot of them were kind of waiting for some help to move forward. And the Greenest Region Compact through SolSmart has really advanced that."

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About the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is a membership organization of the Chicago region's 273 cities, towns and villages. Founded in 1997 by then Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and leading mayors from nine suburban municipal groups, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus pushes past geographical boundaries and local interests to work on public policy issues. The caucus provides a forum for metropolitan Chicago's chief elected officials to collaborate on common problems and work toward a common goal of improving the quality of life for the millions of people who call the region home.

About SolSmart

SolSmart is a national designation and technical assistance program that recognizes leading solar communities and empowers additional communities to expand their local solar markets. Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, SolSmart strives to cut red tape, drive greater solar deployment, and make it possible for even more American homes and businesses to access solar energy to meet their electricity needs. Learn more at SolSmart.org.

About Naperville

Located 28 miles west of Chicago, Naperville, Ill., is home to approximately 145,000 people. This vibrant, thriving city consistently ranks as a top community in the nation in which to live, raise children and retire. The city is home to acclaimed public and parochial schools, the best public library system in the country, an array of healthcare options and an exceptionally low crime rate. Naperville has ready access to a variety of public transportation, housing and employment options. The city's diversified employer base features high technology firms, retailers and factories, as well as small and home-based businesses. Residents also enjoy world-class parks, diverse worship options, the opportunity to serve on several City boards and commissions, a thriving downtown shopping and dining area, a renowned outdoor history museum known as Naper Settlement and an active civic community. For more information, please visit our website at www.naperville.il.us.