



# Pete Antos-Ketcham Joins Energize Vermont as Executive Director

## Antos-Ketcham Brings 22 Years of Natural Resource Management to the Statewide Non-profit

Huntington, VT – Energize Vermont is pleased to announce that Pete Antos-Ketcham, formerly of the Green Mountain Club (GMC), has joined the organization as its new Executive Director. Antos-Ketcham succeeds Mark Whitworth.

While Executive Director, Whitworth led many of the organization's initiatives including lobbying for effective climate change policies, environmental preservation, and sensible deployment of renewables. Whitworth will continue to carry out policy analysis for Energize Vermont and will serve on its Board of Directors.

Pete Antos-Ketcham comes to Energize Vermont with over 22 years in natural resource and non-profit management. Antos-Ketcham is leaving his position as GMC's Director of Land and Facilities Management. While at GMC, he oversaw the construction of the club's new Visitor Center in Waterbury Center, Vermont. The Visitor Center consumes no fossil fuels and employs appropriately-scaled renewables to produce more electricity than it uses. It demonstrates an approach to an energy future that doesn't require massive energy sprawl.

Antos-Ketcham said, "I look forward to continuing the great work Mark has done. He



has been a clear voice advocating responses to climate change that respect our communities and preserve our natural resources.

“People are worried about climate change and they are concerned that Vermont’s climate change response has gone very wrong. They wonder what has happened to the traditional guardians of Vermont’s natural resources heritage. Why are the conservation groups not promoting real conservation? Why aren’t natural resource groups protecting our natural resources? Why is no one representing the real interests of the public?”

“Energize Vermont offers an alternative for the many people who are disturbed by the conduct of these old-line organizations. Energize Vermont has no industry moguls on its board and has not compromised its mission in exchange for large donations.

“Our first priority in responding to climate change has to be the preservation of our irreplaceable wildlife habitat. Industrializing our mountains, forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands may be profitable for a few, but it is jeopardizing the ability of countless species to adapt to a changing climate. Energy developers are destroying our environment and our cultural heritage for meager amounts of intermittent electricity. I will advocate sensible energy policies that bring our communities together—policies that emphasize conservation, efficiency, and thoughtful siting of Vermont-scale renewables.”

Outgoing Executive Director, Mark Whitworth said, “We look forward to Pete’s leadership of Energize Vermont. His many years of experience with the Green Mountain Club, his advocacy for effective climate change response, and his passion for preserving Vermont’s landscape, make him ideally suited to Energize Vermont’s mission to promote common-sense renewable energy solutions.”

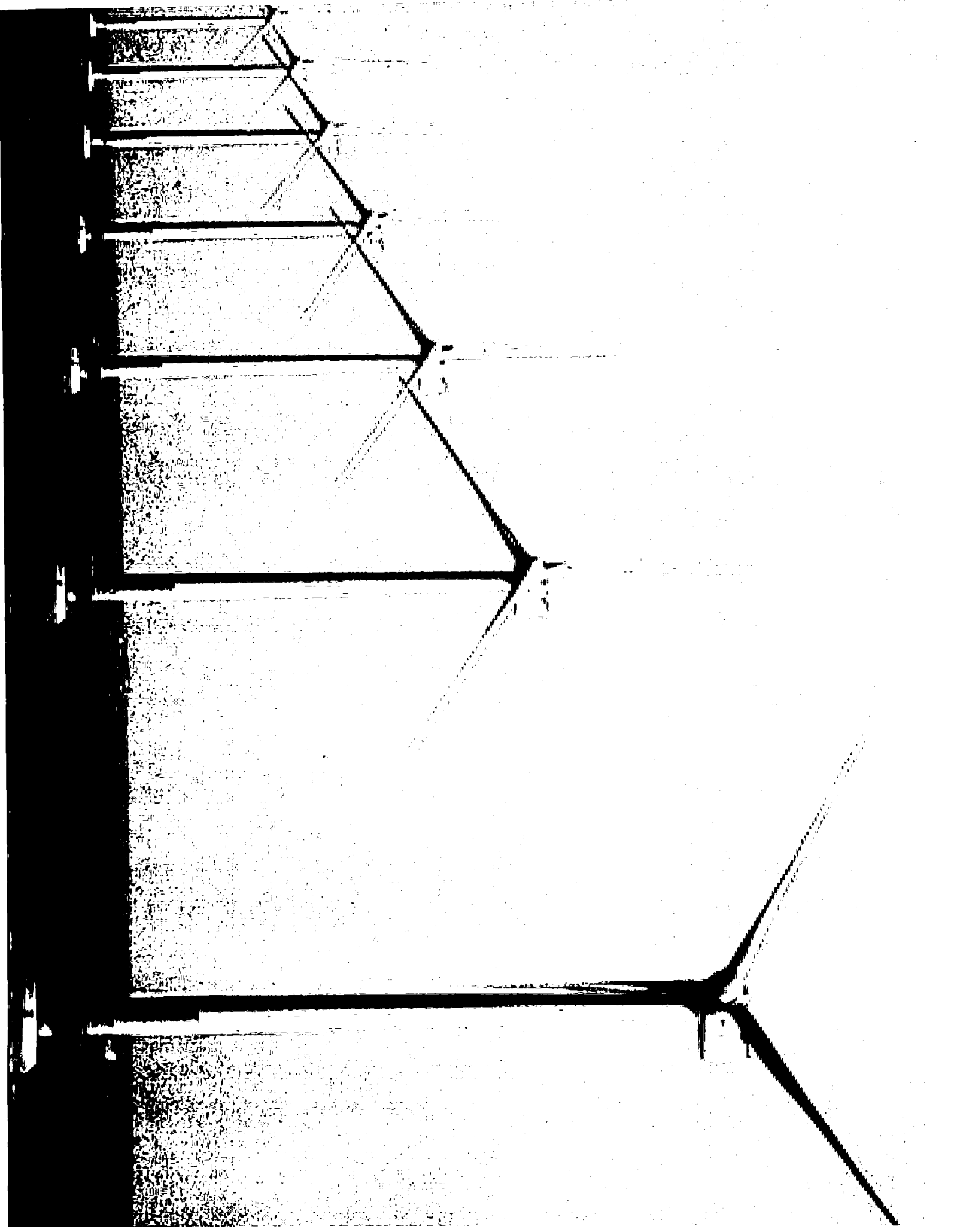
Board member and former Executive Director Lukas Snelling said, “We couldn’t be happier with the appointment of Antos-Ketcham to lead the organization. Pete comes to us with deep experience in natural resource management and is greatly respected in the environmental community for the work he has done. Pete will continue the organization’s growth and work with his fellow Vermonters toward an energy future that emphasizes sustainability, conservation, adaptation, and resilience.”

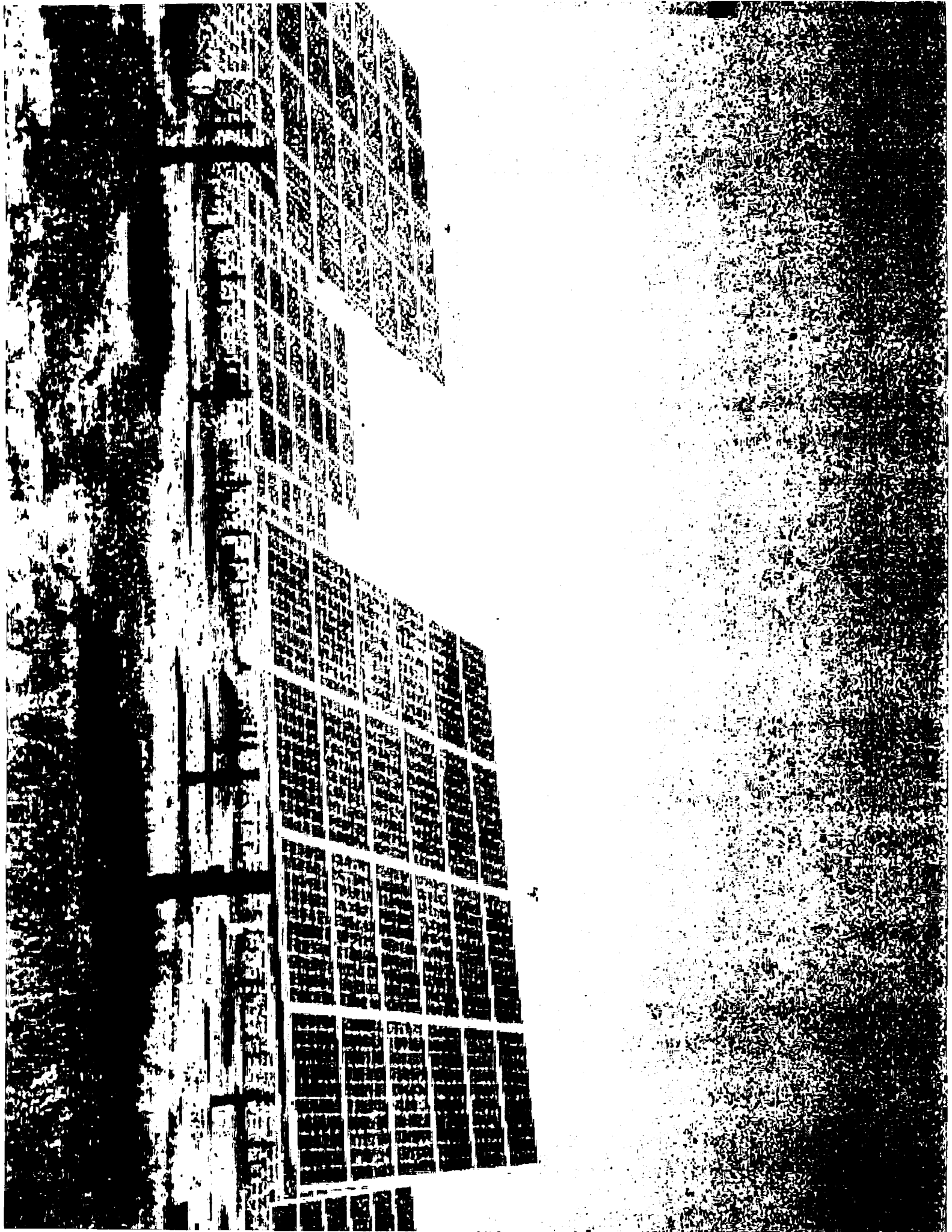
Pete Antos-Ketcham is a resident of Starksboro, where he lives with his wife and two children. He graduated from UVM with a B.S. in Environmental Studies. He has served six years on the ATC (Appalachian Trail Conservancy) Stewardship Council, the Board of Directors for the RMC (Randolph Mountain Club) and as an Emergency Medical Technician for Stowe Rescue, Stowe Mountain Rescue and Huntington First Response.

*Energize Vermont is a non-profit education and advocacy organization that promotes renewable energy solutions that are in harmony with the irreplaceable character of Vermont, and that contribute to the well-being of all her people. This mission is achieved by researching, collecting, and analyzing information from all sources; and disseminating it to the public, community leaders, legislators, media, and regulators for the purpose of ensuring informed decisions for long-term stewardship of our communities.*

For more information about Energize Vermont and the organization's mission, visit [energizevermont.org](http://energizevermont.org).

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# BLITTERSDORF SEEKS CPG FOR SOLAR ARRAY TO POWER JAY PEAK

BY JENNIFER HERSEY CLEVELAND  
Staff Writer

**MORGAN** — A landowner and developer of renewable energy projects is seeking a certificate of public good to build a 500-kilowatt, net-metered solar array off the Valley Road.

The project will produce power solely for Jay Peak Inc., through the Vermont Electric Cooperative's (VEC) distribution lines.

Seymour Lake Solar registered agent, David Blittersdorf, owner of AllEarth Renewables, has also proposed a two-turbine industrial-sized wind development on Kidder Hill in Frisburg, although

he has not yet filed with the Public Service Board (PSB).

Blittersdorf plans to build the Morgan solar project immediately after getting PSB approval, but will not connect to the grid until after Jan. 1, to accommodate VEC's 2015 net-metering program cap.

The project would benefit VEC's distribution system, according to the application, by acting as a load reducer during peak periods in the summer months.

Jay Peak would retain the net-metering credits, while Blittersdorf would retain the environmental attributes of the renewable energy credits.

Blittersdorf's application for the Morgan solar project, filed Sept. 2, indicates that Vermont Environmental Research Associates is developing the project for the developer.

One hundred-5-kilowatt AllEarth Series 20 dual axis solar trackers would be installed on 7 acres of what is now an open hay field on a 57-acre parcel. Each tracker includes 20 photovoltaic panels and an inverter to convert DC power to AC power usable on the grid.

The array would be placed 100 feet back from the closest public road and at least 50 feet from each property boundary.

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## Solar

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Communications and electric wiring will be installed underground and will require a half mile distribution line upgrade from single to three phase, a one-pole line extension to the property, and three pole-mounted transformers for interconnection.

Blittersdorf promises that the array will not make discernible noise, nor will its construction con-

gest traffic during the eight to 12 weeks it will take to build it.

Less than an acre of earth would be disturbed, and the total new impervious surface would be under 1,500 square feet. The trackers would be spaced far enough apart to allow revegetation of the ground beneath and the height and lack of fence would allow the movement of wildlife to continue.

A wetland and its 50-foot buffer would be protected by flagging tape and left untouched, according to the application.

Blittersdorf indicated that he connected with several neighbors about the project, promising one he could continue to hunt, snowmobile and ATV on the land.

The project would have no adverse affect on aesthetics or mapped scenic roads, according to the application. Fryn Valley Road, just the bottoms of some of the trackers would be intermittently visible.

Blittersdorf promises to restore the site at the time the project ceases to operate.

# Morgan Questions Proposed Solar Project

By LAURA CARPENTER  
Express Staff Writer

Residents and town leaders had some questions and concerns regarding a proposed solar project in Morgan. Developer David Bittersdorf has filed an application to the Public Service Board for a Certificate of Public Good to install a 500-kilowatt solar project on Valley Road on 57 acres of land. The project would take up about five-and-a-half acres, Morgan Select Board Chairman Larry Labor said. The power from the project would go into Vermont Electric Cooperative's lines and is supposed to go to Jay Peak. Labor and a few in attendance Monday evening commented that Bittersdorf recently purchased more than 200 acres in town and are wondering what else he has planned. Resident Candy Moot also raised the notion of "project creep," a term used to

describe continuous and uncontrolled growth.

The project is less than a half a mile from Lake Seymour. Labor and others are wondering if that much impervious surface area is going to cause significant runoff to the lake and affect it in a negatively. There is a brook near the project area that flows into the lake.

Other concerns are how the project would affect the grass-land birds that nest in the fields, other wildlife, and aesthetics. The project would be visible from the lake, boats, and lake houses, Labor said.

Labor said that the project is moving along quickly. He just received a packet from the Public Service Board (PSB) notifying the town of the plans, and he had about 21 days to respond or to intervene if the town chooses to do so. Labor expressed concerns over how rapidly energy projects are permitted because they are "fast-tracked" by the PSB.

Labor requested a couple of more days to move if the town decides to intervene. The town is holding an informational meeting Monday, September 21 at 6 p.m. at the Morgan school building. Labor hopes that Bittersdorf will attend an answer questions and address concerns. After questions are answered the selectmen will ask for a hand vote to determine if the town wants to intervene, or not.

"The Town has not formed a position. We will after the informational meeting," Labor said.

"I have concerns about this," Moot said in an interview after the meeting. Her concerns were that the project is on the fast track, about wildlife, aesthetics, and runoff. "The runoff will be similar to a small Walmart."

"I have nothing against solar, but does it make sense to put it so close to the lake when tourism is what keeps this town alive?" Moot wondered.



# No transmission capacity, Hallquist says

by Joseph Gresser

MORGAN — Selectmen here will soon learn more about a 500-kilowatt (kw) solar project planned for an open field off Valley Road about two miles from the town offices. An informational meeting is to be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, September 21, at the Morgan school to discuss plans for Seymour Lake Solar.

According to a petition filed with the state Public Service Board (PSB) on September 2, which lists its registered agent as David Blittersdorf, Seymour Lake Solar hopes to receive a Certificate of Public Good for a 500-kilowatt array on land owned by Mr. Blittersdorf.

The petition says the project will be connected to the grid using the Vermont Electric Cooperative's (VEC) lines.

That was a surprise to David Hallquist, VEC's general manager, who said Tuesday that Mr. Blittersdorf hasn't spoken with the cooperative about his plans in Morgan or his plans to build two wind turbines in Irsburg.

"We don't have the capacity," Mr. Hallquist said, adding that Mr. Blittersdorf's plans were likely to come to a quick end when he finds out what it will cost to connect his projects to the grid.

Speaking from California where he and Mr. Blittersdorf were attending a conference, Andrew Savage, Mr. Blittersdorf's spokesman, said he was surprised to hear that VEC officials are so certain the projects are not possible.

"It sounds like he has information we don't," he said.

Usually an interconnect study is conducted after a project is proposed, and that determines whether it can go forward, Mr. Savage said.

He expressed confidence that, once the study is carried out, a way will be found for the projects to go forward.

Despite Mr. Hallquist's statement, the application says that VEC has reviewed the project and concluded it will have no adverse impact on the safety and reliability of the distribution system if proper modifications are made by Mr. Blittersdorf.

If the project is permitted, it will operate as a group project under the state's net metering program. Because VEC has reached its cap for accepting net metered connections in 2015, the new array would not be connected until after January 1, 2016, the application says.

All the net metering credits will go to the account of Jay Peak, to reduce its power costs, the petition says.

# Costly mega-solar project eyes Barton

by Joseph Gresser

BARTON — Renewable energy is one of the goals of Vermont law, but there can be too much of a good thing, according to Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) General Manager David Hallquist.

An out-of-state developer wants to build six 20-megawatt solar projects, including ones in Highgate and Barton, he said in a recent interview.

Each would be more than ten times bigger than the 1.89-megawatt Barton Solar project located on Route 16. That solar array takes up about 25 acres, and the bigger ones will need around

300 acres, Mr. Hallquist said. Ranger Solar of Yarmouth,

Maine, is the company Mr. Hallquist said plans to put up the projects.

When contacted last week Aaron Svedlow, that company's director of environmental permitting, would say only that Ranger Solar is looking into building a project in the Barton area and will probably go ahead with it.

He declined to say how big the project will be, but did say his company only builds industrial scale solar projects with megawatts of capacity.

Mr. Svedlow said a company representative will meet with (Continued on page twenty-six.)

# The projects are not needed

(Continued from page one.)

Barton Selectmen in a few weeks to outline their proposal.

The company has already had such a meeting with selectmen in Highgate and outlined a 20-megawatt solar project of the type described by Mr. Hallquist. The company said the project will

mean 79 construction jobs, and three and a half permanent jobs for operators of the facility.

According to a handout from the company, the solar array will result in \$8-million in tax revenues over the life of the project.

Kerrick Johnson, vice-president of communications for the Vermont Electric Power Company, which operates the lines that would carry the power produced by the projects, declined to comment on Ranger's activities.

His company is bound by nondisclosure agreements, he explained.

Mr. Hallquist said VEC was asked to sign such an agreement but refused. That has left him free to talk about, and oppose, the projects, he said.

"These projects follow the old model of large power plants," he said.

The new model of electricity supply calls for distributed generation, with smaller generation facilities located close to power users.

The old model is very inefficient, Mr. Hallquist said.

He said that everyone in the state will be against the solar arrays proposed by Ranger for that reason.

So far the company has not filed a request

with the state Public Service Board (PSB) for the Certificate of Public Good it would need before beginning construction, according to the board's secretary, Susan Hudson.

In its presentation to the Highgate Selectmen, Ranger officials said they expect to file a 45-day notice of an application this month.

There are strong signs that Ranger's plans have gone beyond just words, though. Any project hoping to tie into the New England electric grid must stand in line for transmission space. The line, or queue, is a page on the ISO. New England website that lists projects that hope to be allowed to hook into the grid. ISO-New England is the operator of the region's electric grid.

As of September 1 the ISO-New England Interconnection Request Queue shows six 20-megawatt solar projects listed in Franklin, Windsor, Orange, Orleans and Rutland counties.

The one slated for Orleans County plans to connect to the grid via a 46kV line in Irasburg.

The projects are not needed, but the developers hope to take advantage of a 1978 federal law to overcome regulatory resistance, Mr. Hallquist said. The law, called the Public Utility

(Continued on page twenty-seven.)

## JOB OPENING

**CENTER MANAGER:** Exciting, full-time opportunity available for a unique individual who enjoys a work environment that is challenging and rewarding. The NEKCA Newport Head Start/Early Head Start program is seeking a leader who will provide support and supervision to staff, as well as leading a team effort to provide quality early childhood and family-centered services. The ideal candidate will possess strong organizational skills, the ability to meet program timelines and implement federal and state licensing requirements. Minimum of Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Human/Child Development or related field; BA preferred and 2 years of experience required. Supervisory experience preferred.

The closing date for applications is September 28, 2015, or until filled. To apply, send a cover letter, resume, and 3 references to: [aburbo@nekcavt.org](mailto:aburbo@nekcavt.org), fax to: 802-334-5249, or mail to: NEKCA Human Resources, P.O. Box 346, Newport, VT 05855. E.O.E.

# Ratepayers would pay 70 percent of new lines

(Continued from page twenty-six)

Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA), was enacted during the energy crisis of the Jimmy Carter administration, and was intended to promote the use of small scale hydro power. Mr. Hallquist said.

PURPA calls for companies to buy power from such producers, known in the law as qualifying facilities or QFs. The QFs sign contracts with utilities that guarantee they will receive payment equivalent to the "avoided cost" of producing that power. That means a QF can sign a contract that guarantees it will be paid the amount it would cost the utility to produce or buy the power it generates.

In most states the utility that the QF ties into is required to buy all the power it produces. Vermont, though, has many small municipal utilities that could be swamped if a big generator connected to its lines, said Bob Amelang, a retired power engineering consultant who worked for Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) and Green Mountain Power (GMP), among other firms.

As a result, Vermont rules require that such power is bought by all the utilities in the state in proportion to the amount of power each sells annually, he said.

Being required to buy large amounts of power from a PURPA qualifying facility will force Vermont utilities to take power from the new solar projects and back off contracts with Hydro Quebec and even Lowell Community Wind. Mr. Hallquist said.

"It gets even more strange," he said. "It caught us all off guard."

Under a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) rule known as FERC 1000, Ranger Solar will only have to pay 30 percent of the cost of new transmission lines that will have to be constructed in order to move the new power, he said.

The rest of the expense would be borne by ISO New England, which manages the electric

met with VELCO officials who pointed out the difficulties the project would impose on utilities.

"They said it's not our problem," Mr. Hallquist said.

Power lines dedicated to moving solar power are substantially less efficient than those transmitting power from less intermittent sources, he said.

Those transmitting energy from a mix of sources are about 50 percent efficient, but a line transmitting only solar power has an efficiency of around 15 percent, Mr. Hallquist said.

"This is the opposite of what Vermont wants us to do with Act 56," he said. "It's an unexpected outcome of public policy."

Mr. Amelang said solar power presents another difficulty for the grid. Large amounts of intermittent power make it difficult for ISO-New England to keep demand and generation balanced, he said. Grid operators are skilled in predicting the normal ebb and flow of use and can anticipate events like a surge in usage around the time most people wake and get ready to face the day.

Solar power can be unpredictable, even though efforts are being made to improve the ability to foresee clouds that can block the sun, its fuel. Because demand and generation must always be in balance, the result is that more generators need to be kept at the ready to pick up in case the solar arrays stop producing suddenly, Mr. Amelang said.

Mr. Hallquist said the state Public Service Board (PSB), which has the power to grant or deny the Certificates of Public Good needed before a utility can build such a project, may not

be able to stop it.

"The PSB has to take into account not only state but federal laws in making its decisions," he said.

While utilities and VELCO hope the PSB will put a stop to Ranger Solar's plans, Mr. Hallquist said they can't rely on hope.

"We need to get PURPA off the books," he said.

Mr. Amelang was somewhat more optimistic. Although contracts are often signed that rely on predictions of what the cost will be far into the future, the state can determine that the avoided cost be calculated on an annual basis.

That, he said, would make the project far more risky for bondholders, and may make financing the project difficult.

Even so, the sale of renewable energy credits to utilities in southern New England, or the proceeds that might come if a cap-and-trade system is instituted to regulate carbon emissions, might make up for that, Mr. Amelang said.

Although each of the six projects Ranger Solar already has in the works is about five times bigger than the largest solar array in the state, Mr. Hallquist said they may not be the biggest array planned by the company. His company, he said, was told by Ranger employees that it hopes to build a 100-megawatt array on 2,000 acres in Franklin County.

## INVITATION TO BID SNOW REMOVAL SERVICES LOWELL GRADED SCHOOL

The Board of School Directors of Lowell Graded School is accepting bids for Snow Removal Services. Services to include: plowing of driveway, parking lot, and perimeter of the building, plus shoveling all exits and the front sidewalk. Also, hourly rate for extra shoveling necessitated when snow from roof blocks exits.

Bids should be for the 2015-2016 ONLY or 2015-16, 2016-17 & 2017-18 seasons.

Full specifications and substantial cost bid study of the 3 page document entitled Snow Removal Services Contract Bid

Specifications: Lowell Graded School

## Notice

### Residents of Barton Village

The Barton Town Clerk's Office will be open on 9/23/15 from 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. for the purpose of taking applications for the checklist for the Barton Village vote that is to occur on 9/29/15.

# N.Y. Firm Pitches Huge Solar Project

## *Proposes Array In Randolph Ctr.*

By M. D. Drysdale

**A**t the Randolph Selectboard meeting Tuesday night, developers gave their formal notice of intent that their firm, Ranger Solar, is planning a 100-acre solar farm on the East Bethel Road in Randolph Center.

The proposed development would produce 20 megawatts of power, far more than any other solar installation currently in Vermont; the company intends to build several more.

At 20 megawatts, the Randolph Center solar array would be roughly 10 times the size of the solar farm visible from Interstate 89 in Sharon, which was the largest solar installation in Vermont when it was built.

It would cost about \$29 million to build, they estimated.

Ranger Solar employees Aaron Sverdlow and C.J. Walsh said they would file a petition in October with the Public Service Board for a permit for the installation. Because this is an energy installation, it is not covered by Act 250 but by a separate review by the PSB under Act 248.

Ranger Solar, a New York State corporation, has "an agreement" with the prime landowner, Sverdlow said, but is still working on details. It is likely that multiple owners will be involved, he said.

### **Location of Site**

The proposed site is two miles south from Randolph Center Village on the right, just before Crocker Road diverges to the left, in the vicinity of an electric transformer station.

At that point, a large south-facing field runs parallel to the road, and another large sloped field, farther from the road, faces east.

Sverdlow said it is likely that some forested land will also be used.

Asked by Selectboard Chair Larry Richburg if there would be an impact on prime agricultural soils, he explained that solar installations are considered to be "temporary."

"At the end of the lease period we are to remove the project and restore the land to its original condition," he said.

Town Manager Mel Adams asked about the potential taxes that the town might expect to rake in from the completed project.

### **Tax Bonus?**

Sverdlow noted the \$29 million investment, and in a brochure, the company predicted that "over the

See **SOLAR** page A-11

## **Opponents Weigh In On New Exit 4 Plan**

By Katie Jickling

Four organizations and state agencies met the September 14 deadline to file feedback on Jesse Sammis' revised plan for a mixed-use development at Exit 4.

The groups charge that the revised plan is not clearly presented, fails to meet requirements for on- and off-site mitigation for primary agricultural soils, and does not comply with regional and town plans, among other complaints.

Sammis submitted a more compact project design on August 17, in response to feedback on the proposal from the Act 250 commission reviewing the plan. According to his filings, the plan now leaves undeveloped 58% of the 132 acres of primary farmland, as compared to 49% in the original proposal. All told, the proposed development will cover 101 of the 172-acre property along the I-89 interchange.

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# SOLAR

*(continued from Page A-1)*

life of the project" more than \$3 million would be paid in property taxes to the town.

The power, he said, would be sold to Vermont utilities, but under questioning from the small audience, he noted that the environmental credits are likely to be sold out of state, which some believe is a questionable practice.

Richburg seemed a bit dubious because of the size of the project. "A 100-acre solar farm seems a little out of scale for Vermont," he said. "My biggest concern is, will it be hidden away enough so it won't be an eyesore?"

Sverdlow responded that the

PSB has requirements for aesthetics, and the project can be somewhat screened from view.

After their presentation, Sverdlow and Walsh were followed outside by a few attendees who were worried about the project and stayed to discuss and answer questions.

## Statewide Trend

A report this week from the Department of Public Service, headed by Commissioner Chris Recchia of Randolph, showed that job growth in the "clean energy industry" now supports 16,341 jobs, up from 1000 a year ago. The industry includes 2519 businesses, most with fewer than five employees.

(The projected Randolph display would create 79 construction jobs, but only 3-4 jobs when in operation, it is estimated.)

Growth in the industry is so strong that Recchia told the Times Argus that the state no longer has to pay incentives to the industry for building installations.

Ranger Solar, created only six months ago, is proposing at least four 20-megawatt farms in Vermont.

According to the company's brochure, the increased scale of solar developments is largely responsible for sharply decreased costs per watt of power generated. Prices have fallen from \$8 in 2005 to less than \$3 now.