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Campaign to Transform St. Thomas Into Solar Energy Mecca in USVI Set for Launch January

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An effort to increase the use of solar energy in St. Thomas for residential, commercial and nonprofit use is set to launch in January and will utilize a crowdfunding strategy that organizers say will lower the cost of the traditionally pricey components of solar to allow widespread participation.

The effort, dubbed "Solarize St. Thomas", seeks to lower the cost of solar energy and battery storage installations through the power of bulk-purchasing, reducing contractor acquisition costs and transferring those savings to the residential and commercial residents of St. Thomas.

The more St. Thomas property owners that participate, the greater the savings for all. "For the first time in the U.S. Virgin Islands, a local coalition has formed to help make solar energy more

affordable to all,” said Doug White, a St. Thomas resident and local green architect. “Through this campaign, we have an opportunity to both significantly raise awareness of the benefits of this renewable source of power and to lower the cost to access it by leveraging the power of group purchasing.”

Starting with an official campaign launch on Jan. 14 and throughout the first half of 2021, Solarize St. Thomas will put on a series of clean energy education and community outreach events with a goal of increasing participation and encouraging all solar and battery installations to be complete by the end of next year, according to a release issued Tuesday.

“Valuable federal tax credits for homeowners will be available in 2021. WAPA is also offering a new ‘Net Billing’ program,” said Don Moreland, founder of Solar Crowdsourcing, the firm administering the program. “Our goal is to help educate local residents about these incentives and programs, demonstrate the benefits of solar energy and battery storage systems, and make it easy to get a free proposal from a trusted source. Then, with the power of bulk purchasing, we can achieve volume discounts on materials and installation services.”

Solarize St. Thomas is now accepting advance registrations for the upcoming program. Interested residents may visit the Solarize St. Thomas [website](#) to learn more about the program, get advance information on campaign details, register for the launch event and sign up for a free evaluation.

Coalition organizations involved in partnering to ensure Solarize St. Thomas is a success include Rotary Club of St. Thomas East ECO, UVI’s Caribbean Green Technology Center, the Environmental Association of St. Thomas-St. John, the Virgin Islands Conservation Society, the VI Electric Vehicle Assoc.-North, and Solar Crowdsourcing as well as the Virgin Islands Energy Office.

Solar energy design and installation companies have bid to become the sole provider of equipment and installation services for Solarize St. Thomas. The winning installation company will be announced before the campaign begins along with descriptions of tiered pricing and equipment options.