



QUICK FACTS

In the Fall/Spring of 2019/2020, AEA plans to reconvene the Alaska Solar Working Group to share information and track the performance of solar projects in Alaska.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:

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ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES: SOLAR

CURRENT STATUS

AEA has awarded three Renewable Energy Fund grants for solar energy projects. The first was to Golden Valley Electric Association for a 1,300 square-foot solar thermal water heating project at the Denali Education Center near Denali National Park. The second was to Alaska Village Electric Cooperative for a 9.6 kilowatt (kW) solar photovoltaic project in Kaltag. The third was to Alaska Power and Telephone for a 24 kW solar photovoltaic project in Eagle. The Denali Education Center solar thermal project was commissioned in August of 2009, the Kaltag PV project was commissioned in Sept of 2011, and the Eagle project was commissioned in June of 2015.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Alaska's high geographic latitude presents the challenge of having minimal solar insolation during long winter months when the energy demand is greatest, and much higher levels during the long summer months. Solar energy plays an important role in small, off-grid power generation and low-power applications, such as remote communication sites and switch points on the railroad. Several rural communities are integrating solar energy into rural power grids. Many small scale solar utility and distributed generation projects are in use on the railbelt electrical grid. Over time, the operations and performance of these systems in Alaska will assist in evaluating the applicability and use of solar technology and facilitate the development of solar Best Management Practices for the state.

Solar technology is rapidly changing with the advent of less expensive panels, higher efficiency panels, more sophisticated inverters, and micro-inverters.

AEA provides solar energy information, references, resources, and technical assistance, and shares information about solar project issues like micro-grid phase imbalance.

ONGOING PARTNERSHIPS

In the Fall/Spring of 2019/2020, AEA plans to reconvene the Alaska Solar Working Group to share information and track the performance of solar projects in Alaska. During this time frame, it is anticipated that both federal and private grant funding opportunities will become available to assist with funding for projects in rural tribal communities. Additionally, AEA and the Stakeholders Advisory Group, are currently working on an initiative to develop the C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Energy) finance program, a public/private partnership, which was authorized by statute in September of 2017. Solar energy systems are among the many commercial energy improvement measures that will be eligible for financing under the C-PACE program.