



PlanItGreen on a mission to educate local organizations about solar



Rooftop solar on Ridgeland Common Recreation Complex

Since being [selected](#) for the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar in Your Community Challenge earlier this year, the PlanItGreen solar team met with leaders of local organizations to help them better understand "the whole concept of solar," says **Gary Cuneen** of Seven Generations Ahead, which is spearheading PIG's solar initiative. The most recent presentation was held for the Communityworks advisory board.

The outreach is aimed at institutions that could possibly accommodate a rooftop solar installation and those that want to buy solar through power purchase agreements at below conventional market rates. So far, the Oak Park Park District has taken the lead on solar, with three installations throughout the village and another in the works.

Solar has emerged as the leading alternative energy option as PIG continues to investigate ways toward a more sustainable future. Cuneen and other PlanItGreen Core Team members say the tone of conversations regarding solar energy has shifted. It's becoming more common to hear

people say, "Solar is happening. It's time to get on board," Cuneen said.

AWARDS



Oak Park Park District recognized for solar

The Park District of Oak Park received a Best of the Best Award for Green Practices from the Illinois Association of Park Districts for its green initiatives, specifically focused on its solar installations. The District has solar at three locations: a 100kW system on top of on the south roof of Ridgeland Common Recreation Complex, 20 solar panels on Longfellow Center through a partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and a solar array of 19.6 kW at the Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center.

River Forest cited for stormwater management

The Village of River Forest Northside Stormwater Management Project is now nationally recognized with the **National Project of the Year Award** in the \$5-25 million category by the American Public Works Association. With the dual purpose of reducing basement flooding from sewer backups and on-street flooding and increasing property values, it was the largest infrastructure project in the Village's history.

Irving to launch zero waste program, Beye a model in diversion

D97's Irving Elementary is set to launch its zero waste program on Dec. 4 as the school has been putting lots

of effort around waste reduction, says Denise Frank, D97 Parent Liaison.

Meanwhile, Beye Elementary School has the highest rate of landfill diversion in the state - 97 percent - making it a model that all schools hopes to attain when practices are in place and established.



Denise Frank, D97 Parent Liaison to PlantGreen.

Also, parents of Districts 90 and 97 schoolchildren and members of their Green Teams held their quarterly meeting recently with the goal of systematizing processes and sharing best practices. Excited about how they can connect and streamline communications, they decided to rename their Google group "Zero Waste Schools - Oak Park and River Forest."

Nearly every school in the two districts had representatives at the meeting to report on the status of zero waste programs in their lunchrooms. Participants also shared signage, advice on parent volunteer recruitment and retention, and resources for zero waste assemblies.



Triton takes the lead on monarch migration

Under the auspices of the Illinois Green Economy Network, the **Triton College Sustainability Center** is leading a project to create a Monarch Migration Network among community colleges in Illinois, reports Adrian

Fisher, Sustainability Coordinator for

Triton. The sustainability managers of College of Lake County, McHenry County College and Oakton Community College are also members of the core development team.

So far, 17 of the 48 community colleges have expressed interest in joining the network. A Community College Monarch Pledge, similar to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation, is in draft stage. The pledge will include action steps that call for creating or restoring habitat, educating students, and community outreach and education. It will also include partnering with other groups engaged in Monarch conservation.

Interfaith Green Network highlights Report Card, successes

The Interfaith Green Network (IGN) held its third annual Interfaith Sustainability Breakfast. The program highlighted the latest [Oak Park and River Forest Community Sustainability Report Card](#) of progress toward local goals and IGN's successful programs, including the Native Garden

Tour and the initiative to eliminate the use of styrofoam at the local PADS shelters, located in several local houses of worship.

Civic and government leaders from Oak Park, representatives from the Sustainability and Environmental Commissions from both Oak Park and River Forest, clergy leaders, and green teams members from more than a dozen local congregations attended the breakfast, held at Unity Temple in Oak Park.

Harmon visits ROPH's composting and food donation facility

State Sen. Don Harmon (Oak Park), Seven Generations Ahead and the Illinois Environmental Council toured Rush Oak Park Hospital's kitchen to see their composting and food donation programs in action on Oct. 3.



Since starting the program several years ago, Rush has diverted well over 100 tons of food from landfills.

Upcoming

6th Annual PlanItGreen Institutional Leaders Forum

Tues, Dec. 5, 2017

Oak Park Green Awards

Wed., Dec. 13

PlanItGreen is a project of the OPRF Community Foundation facilitated by Seven Generations Ahead, which engages multiple community institutions, and is guided by the OPRF Community Foundation's Communityworks Advisory Board and the PlanItGreen Core Team.

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