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Two Virginia Communities Receive SolSmart Designation

Williamsburg and Pulaski County Now Well Positioned for Solar Development

Richmond, Va. – Two Virginia Communities are now SolSmart designated. The city of Williamsburg and Pulaski County recently received designations due to their work to encourage solar energy growth. The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) partners with the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia to offer this no-cost assistance program to all Virginia localities.

"Williamsburg and Pulaski have attained the SolSmart designation and have joined a growing list of local partners devoting efforts toward a Clean Energy Virginia," said **DMME Director John Warren**. "This program provides expert guidance to assist local governments in the development of renewable energy and these designations will facilitate solar project activities in jurisdictions across the Commonwealth."

"We are proud to contribute to such an important designation for the city of Williamsburg and Pulaski County in their efforts to become leaders in solar energy development," stated **Weldon Cooper Center Director Larry Terry**. "The SolSmart program exemplifies our mission at the Weldon Cooper Center to work collaboratively with localities across the state in developing new opportunities for their communities, and we hope that this work is just the beginning of our efforts together."

DMME became a SolSmart program advisor in the summer of 2020. Any locality is able to work toward the designation by requesting a consultation on the [DMME website](#). The Virginia Clean Economy Act requires electricity be generated in Virginia using carbon-free sources by 2050, increasing the demand for renewable energy.

Williamsburg received its Silver SolSmart designation most recently. The city took steps to remove obstacles to solar development and ensure faster, easier and more affordable deployment for homes and businesses.

“The city of Williamsburg had a great experience working with the SolSmart team. When questions arose the team was very prompt to answer and aid the city,” said **Matt Westheimer, Chief Building Official for the City of Williamsburg**. “Teaming with SolSmart helped us to identify areas of improvement in our permitting and inspection process thus making it a seamless and easy track for those wanting to install any type of renewable energy. I would strongly recommend teaming with SolSmart.”

Pulaski was awarded a Gold designation and a Special Recognition Award for the plan in place to conduct inspections. A SolSmart Gold designation is a signal that Pulaski is open for “solar business”.

“Localities are beginning to recognize the importance of supporting its citizens’ and the business community’s desires to access and transition to solar, and the SolSmart resources and professional expertise can help a community better achieve their goals and significantly increase their solar readiness”, stated **Jonathan D. Sweet, County Administrator**. “We are confident that our SolSmart Gold designation is going to enhance Pulaski County’s ability to serve our current and future solar demands, and we would encourage other counties and municipalities to consider seeking a SolSmart designation for the value it could bring to their respective community’s solar program.”

About SolSmart:

[SolSmart](#) is a national program that has helped over 350 local governments make it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to go solar. The program is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office.

About the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The University of Virginia’s [Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#) serves communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond by combining decades of knowledge about government, communities, and the people of Virginia with contemporary and advanced research, analytical expertise, and focused training for high performance.

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