



## News Release

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### **NorthWestern Energy and the National Center for Appropriate Technology Offer Financial Incentives for Residential Solar Electric Project**

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**Butte, MT. – March 29, 2004 – Montana homeowners interested in utilizing the sun to produce electricity can take advantage of NorthWestern Energy's financial incentives to help pay for the system.**

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) developed and is administering the Residential Solar Electric Demonstration Project, which is funded by NorthWestern Energy's Universal Systems Benefits (USB) charge, paid by the Company's electric customers.

The project is in its fifth year and, to date, has installed 59 solar electric systems on Montana homes. Successful applicants will receive a financial incentive of \$4.00 per peak watt of manufacturer's capacity rating for the photovoltaic array's direct current, up to a maximum rebate of \$8,000. For example, a 1-kilowatt system would be eligible for a \$4,000 incentive, which would cover about 40 percent of the installed cost of the system.

Customers interested in participating in the project must receive their electricity from NorthWestern Energy in Montana, and they must submit a completed application to NCAT. Photovoltaic systems installed under the project must meet NCAT's minimum specifications, and must meet and pass local and state electrical and building codes. Successful applicants must allow NCAT to inspect their system and sign a net metering agreement with NorthWestern Energy.

All of the solar electric systems must be interconnected to the utility grid. Any excess electricity produced by the system will be fed into the utility grid through a net metering agreement to serve other NorthWestern Energy electric customers.

Besides saving homeowners money by generating their own electricity, solar energy systems also have important environmental benefits. They are easy on the environment and help reduce reliance on electricity produced by fossil fuels and resulting greenhouse gas emissions.

To request an application, contact Ray Schott, NCAT, at 866-723-8677 or [rays@ncat.org](mailto:rays@ncat.org), or download the application at [www.montanagreenpower.com](http://www.montanagreenpower.com). Completed applications must be submitted to NCAT by April 23, 2004.

***About NorthWestern Energy***

NorthWestern Energy, a division of NorthWestern Corporation, is one of the largest providers of electricity and natural gas in the Upper Midwest and Northwest, serving approximately 608,000 customers in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska.  
[www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com)

***About the National Center for Appropriate Technology***

NCAT, a national non-profit organization headquartered in Butte, Mont., promotes small-scale, local, and sustainable solutions to reduce poverty, promote healthy communities, and protect natural resources.

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