

BREEE News V39

Boulder Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Working Group

<http://boulderenergy.org>

10/16/05

"The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy."

- Henry Ward Beecher

"...and to run my meter backwards!"

- a happy solar owner

### **Action Item: PVREA Members Needed to Support Net Metering!**

Do you, or does someone you know, live in PVREA (Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association) territory - parts of Boulder, Larimer, and Weld counties? I am organizing supporters of solar to approach PVREA's Board to implement true net metering. *We need lots of PVREA members!* Please contact Ken Regelson at [regelson@mac.com](mailto:regelson@mac.com) to find out more.

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### *Hot Picks*

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### **A 37 Deliberative Session**

Ken Regelson

The PUC met in a deliberative meeting Friday, October 7. As is the case in all PUC deliberative sessions, the audience could watch but not speak. PUC Staff presented their recommendations on the A 37 rules. The Commissioners responded, questioned, discussed, and voted on the recommendations and modifications. The meeting lasted 3.5 hours.

The Commissioners and Staff were working from a 60+ page document that contained suggested wording from staff, and comments/wording from other parties (Core37, Xcel, Aquila, Tri-State, etc). As is normal practice in deliberations, members of the audience are not allowed to have a copy.

WARNING: These are not final rules but only deliberation, and things can *still* change!!!

Highlights:

- The rules will include the legislative intent of voters embodied in the language on the ballot itself.

- Rebates should be fully retroactive to 1/1/2004 (not 12/1/2004 as proposed in compromise rules).

- Where Xcel has a contract with a generator that does not mention RECs (e.g., many of the hydro facilities in Boulder), RECs for compliance are created and belong to Xcel.

- The third party administrator was nixed as too expensive. They did however adopt some specific rules to help insure transparency. They generally acknowledged the concept of A37 being the people's rule and the people have rights to know that the standard is being met (or the people's champions (e.g., Western Resource Advocates)).

- \$19 million was mentioned several times as the starting annual amount of the solar rebate pool.

- The concept of the solar rebate pool of money possibly being larger than 1% seemed to be generally accepted. This means that we can expect the savings from wind to be used as a credit to apply against the 1% rate cap. They adopted a compromise on what to count. Consider wind farms in 3 categories:

A. Lamar wind farm (and any other existing, already built eligible renewable resource).

B. The remaining 60 MW wind farm in the 500 MW wind RFP (and any renewables in the all-source RFP. i.e., wind farms not yet built, but in progress in some fashion with Xcel and approved through the PUC as part of the LCP process).

C. Future wind farms after the all-source.

Core37 would count the savings from A B & C to be added to the pool for solar rebates (and likely reduce the rate impact below the 1% cap).

Xcel would count only C.

The Commission chose a compromise of B & C for counting savings to be placed in the solar rebate pool. A, B & C would count for meeting the standard.

- The increased costs for A 37 will be included in a separate line item on a customer's bill. The question of whether this would turn to a negative number when savings are achieved was not addressed.

- A 10% cap of Xcel's administration costs (cap may be waived, as most anything at the PUC can be, by the Commissioners).

- Written initial rules to be issued by mid to late November.

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The above are my notes and recap of the meeting. In addition to any errors in understanding that I may have, please note, again, that any or all of the above is still subject to change by the PUC. To be safe, one needs to wait until the rules are released (in November, touch wood).

The following is my opinion.

While I disagree strongly with some of the positions the PUC took, I was struck by the change in the tone and quality of the discussion. I believe the Commissioners and Staff are trying very hard to figure out and implement the will of the people.

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Next steps: Up to 20 days after the rules are mailed, parties (probably anybody that is interested in this case)

may apply for Triple-R (re-hearing, re-argument, or reconsideration). Triple-R allows a party to apply to the Commission to clarify or include language in the rules -- but not to rehash old arguments. For example, it would be reasonable to bring up the issue of the separate line item on a bill going negative if it is not covered by the rules when they come out. It would not be OK to ask the Commissioners to revisit their decision on the third party administrator. The Commissioners are required to respond to applications for Triple-R within 30 days after the end of the 20 days.

Utilities write implementation plans after the rules are finalized. Rebates start about 30 days after the implementation plans are approved.

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## **Windsorce Subscribers Win**

As of November first, Windsorce subscribers will pay about \$10 less for electricity per month than non-subscribers. Non-subscribers will see their electric rates climb 30% because of natural gas and coal price increases.

Covered in the LA Times, Wall Street Journal, Denver Post, Rocky Mountain News, Daily Camera, etc. For example:

[http://www.dailycamera.com/bdc/science/article/0,1713,BDC\\_2432\\_4151473,00.html](http://www.dailycamera.com/bdc/science/article/0,1713,BDC_2432_4151473,00.html)

[http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci\\_3107482](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_3107482)

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-power15oct15,0,4319994.story?coll=la-home-nation>

What price increases mean to your wallet if you are not on Windsorce:

[http://denverpost.com/business/ci\\_3090532](http://denverpost.com/business/ci_3090532)

From Doug Grinbergs, Kevin Markey, Rick Gilliam, Blake Jones, and others.

Please report any problems subscribing to Windsorce (long waits, Xcel reps that try and talk you out of it, other issues) to Susan Innis [susan@westernresources.org](mailto:susan@westernresources.org)

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**Talk: The Warming of the West**, Boulder. 10/18. 7 PM.

Dr. Martin Hoerling, NOAA

Presented by the Sierra Club's Indian Peak's Group.

Meadows Branch Library. 4800 Baseline Road (Behind Safeway). Free.

Contact Leslie Glustron for information. [lglustrom@qwest.net](mailto:lglustrom@qwest.net)

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To Submit to BREEE News – email [Regelson@mac.com](mailto:Regelson@mac.com). Put BREEE News in the Subject. Suggest a title and a 2 or 3 sentence summary. Include a link to the original article or a web page, or provide your email address, for more information.

Edited and distributed by Ken Regelson. Articles that do not list who submitted them are probably from Ken.

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*From Boulder & Colorado:*

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**Kill-A-Watt Meters**

Measure the usage of power (in kilowatt-hours) of plug-in electrical equipment. Useful for figuring out just how much electricity that old fridge uses. Priced in the low to mid \$20s.

Search for Kill-A-Watt in Google, or buy or borrow one from the Center for Resource Conservation in Boulder. CRC is working on handouts for using the meters.

Contact Rob Hall at CRC for details at [rfhall@qwest.net](mailto:rfhall@qwest.net)

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## **Boulder Council Candidates on Municipalization**

(BREEE News does not typically endorse candidates for election. This article is about a single topic only - municipalization, or candidate support for Boulder Public Power. I urge you to consider all aspects of a candidate, not just this one topic. Summary and editorial remarks are from me. Candidate quotes are from a Boulder Weekly article (link from Doug Grinbergs). - Ken).

Boulder Weekly:

<http://www.boulderweekly.com/archive/101305/coverstory.html>

Opposed to Boulder Public Power:

Shawn L. Coleman: "Four years is not adequate time to set up the infrastructure..."  
(This is true, but irrelevant. Utilities change hands and service providers regularly without interruptions of service. Even under the best of circumstances, Boulder would not even begin setting up infrastructure until 2008. We will be buying some of our power from Xcel for many years to come.)

John Klein: "No. It would be folly..."

(Boulder sends upwards of \$80 million per year to Xcel for electricity. It is too expensive and important to make a decision on this without careful study, analysis, and review. The support for renewables and efficiency is extremely clear in Boulder - as is the support for a modest price increase to support improvements in the sustainability of our power. Amendment 37 was supported by more than 80% of city voters. Amendment 37 calls for both renewables and, if need be, a modest rate increase to pay for those renewables.)

Hard-to-tell:

Richard Polk: (His response to this issue in the Boulder Weekly was fairly neutral. His response to a question on municipalization was negative at the Boulder Tomorrow Forum: "If we were to municipalize, it would be critical that it cost less. I don't think we will make that test." I think that the test is not that it must cost less, but that it cost less or only a little bit more. We already know that reliance on fossil fuels puts us at tremendous risk for price increases for fuel costs and pollution costs.)

In favor under the right circumstances:

(The rest of the candidates appear to have an open mind and are supportive of the process of finding out what the advantages and disadvantages of Boulder Public Power might be. Probably the most supportive was Macon Cowles. Note that Tom Eldridge has been unable to come to forums or respond to surveys due to illness. Tom has been supportive of doing the research needed on Boulder Public Power in the past. We wish him a rapid and complete recovery!)

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### **United Power Attempting to Opt-Out of Amendment 37**

Their website:

[http://www.unitedpower.com/news/election\\_statemandate.htm](http://www.unitedpower.com/news/election_statemandate.htm)

(This is not a balanced and fair campaign. The usual highly questionable statements about higher costs and lower reliability are presented with no balancing opinions in favor of A 37. - Ken)

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### **Boulder Weekly: Dirty Energy.**

Could Xcel Energy be sabotaging Colorado's new renewable-energy requirement?

<http://www.boulderweekly.com/archive/100605/newsspin.html>

From Doug Grinbergs and Blake Jones.

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### **Boulder Solar Week Results**

Boulder's Center for Resource Conservation hosted Boulder's first Solar Week. The week ended in the annual tour of solar homes. The workshops during the week were filled to capacity (and then some). More than 800 people signed up for the solar home tour. Eric Doub, owner, contractor, and tour guide estimated some 500 people toured his Solar Harvest House in North Boulder.

Mini-report by Ken Regelson.

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## **Boulder Gives Away Energy Efficiency Starter Kits**

In recognition of October as Energy Awareness Month, the city of Boulder will be giving away energy efficiency starter kits. To receive a kit, visit the following locations between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.:

- Wednesday Oct. 19 - 1100 Block, Pearl Street Mall;
- Thursday Oct. 20 - Wild Oats, Baseline and Broadway; and
- Wednesday Oct. 26 - 1100 Block, Pearl Street Mall.

"If every household in Boulder replaced their five most frequently used incandescent light bulbs with ENERGY STAR CFLs (compact fluorescent lights), Boulder would save more than 12 million kilowatt hours of energy and keep nearly 21 million pounds of greenhouse gases out of the air," said Sarah Van Pelt, Office of Environmental Affairs. "That is equivalent to keeping 2,080 cars off the road each year. The change would save Boulder households more than \$1 million annually in electricity costs."

For more information, contact Josh Radoff (303) 441-3878 or [radoffj@ci.boulder.co.us](mailto:radoffj@ci.boulder.co.us)

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## **Update on Pueblo Public Power**

"City Attorney Thomas Jagger told City Council that Aquila's recent decision not to sell its Colorado electric utility on the open market doesn't affect the city's attempt to buy it. ... the city could condemn and forcibly buy the system..."

<http://www.chieftain.com/metro/1127829399/1>

Aquila says "Aquila is here to stay".

<http://www.chieftain.com/metro/1128015942/1>

From Ross Vincent.

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## **Report: Less Snow. Less Water. Climate Disruption in the West**

From the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization.

Release and report:

[http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/release\\_snow\\_report\\_1.htm](http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/release_snow_report_1.htm)

[http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/website\\_pictures/Less\\_Snow\\_Less\\_Water.pdf](http://www.rockymountainclimate.org/website_pictures/Less_Snow_Less_Water.pdf)

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*Calendar:*

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**11/2 - 4. Denver. Brownfields Conference (Free)**

Keynote speaker (one of Ken's favorites!) William McDonough.

<http://www.brownfields2005.org/en/Article.aspx?id=23>

Sustainability track.

<http://www.brownfields2005.org/en/Sessions.Browser.aspx>

(click on the "Track" tab, then select sustainability from the pop-up menu).

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**11/4 - 5. Denver. Tending the Garden.**

Cultivating the Commons, Faith, Energy & Public Lands  
National Council of Churches. Fee.

(Ken Regelson will be speaking during the Climate Change session).

<http://www.eco-justice.org/NCC05.asp>

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**11/10 - 11. Denver. Peak Oil Conference**

World-class lineup of 20 speakers. Day 1 will focus on the oil supply vs. depletion balance going forward, Day 2 will focus on intelligent responses and mitigating actions to the looming peak oil phenomenon. Fee.

<http://www.aspo-usa.com/fall2005/index.cfm>

From Morey Wolfson.

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**11/12. Golden. Indoor Air Quality Workshop.**

Colorado Energy Science Center. Fee. 9 AM to noon. NREL Visitor's Center.

[http://www.energyscience.org/homeowners/workshops/indoorairquality\\_reg.htm](http://www.energyscience.org/homeowners/workshops/indoorairquality_reg.htm)

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## 11/15 - 17. Denver. Native Renewables Energy Summit.

Fee.

<http://www.dciamerica.com/brochure/renewables1105.pdf>

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*From Elsewhere:*

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### Short Takes

Clearly written article on Peak Oil. Written for real estate agents.

[http://realtymtimes.com/rta/pages/20051010\\_tsunami.htm](http://realtymtimes.com/rta/pages/20051010_tsunami.htm)

Peak oil poster. Free to teachers. \$9.95 otherwise.

<http://www.oilposter.org/index.html>

Factors collide to fuel new solar optimism.

<http://www.renewableenergyaccess.com/rea/news/story?id=37607>

New York Times: Interest in solar is growing.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/09/realestate/09lizo.html?ex=1215230400&en=0dcc741b9ed123f2&ei=5035&partner=MARKETWATCH>

RMI: Setting the record straight on bio-ethanol. Current production technology is a small win. Very soon to be available cellulosic technology is a big win.

<http://www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid1157.php>

Growing Expectations: Bio-ethanol:

<http://www.sciencenews.org/articles/20051001/bob10.asp>

Seattle Times: The Truth About Global Warming.

[http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?document\\_id=2002549346&zsection\\_id=2002107549&slug=globewarm11&date=20051009](http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?document_id=2002549346&zsection_id=2002107549&slug=globewarm11&date=20051009)

San Francisco Chronicle: There's no disguising it - global warming is no put-on.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/10/09/ING5FF2U031.DTL&hw=kurt+Cuffey&sn=001&sc=1000>

Marine organisms threatened by increasingly acidic oceans (from increasing CO2).

<http://www.whoi.edu/mr/pr.do?id=7388>

Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (Maryland) held an energy summit 9/26. (I found the transcript a worthwhile read. The first half was on global warming (excellent). The second half was on solutions (more variable). - Ken).

[http://www.bartlett.house.gov/SupportingFiles/documents/Bartlett\\_9-26-2005\\_Conference.pdf](http://www.bartlett.house.gov/SupportingFiles/documents/Bartlett_9-26-2005_Conference.pdf)

Wall Street Journal: Safety in Lighter Cars. The auto industry has claimed for years that heavier cars are safer. Heavier cars are also less fuel-efficient. "Honda Motor Co. ... broke from the industry, commissioning studies that found reducing a vehicle's weight while maintaining its size actually saves lives."

<http://www.messenger-inquirer.com/features/perspective/8962791.htm>

New Yorker: The virtues of increasing gas taxes.

[http://www.newyorker.com/talk/content/articles/050926ta\\_talk\\_surowiecki](http://www.newyorker.com/talk/content/articles/050926ta_talk_surowiecki)

Training materials on micro-hydro and other topics.

<http://www.retscreen.net/ang/t.php>

Report: Enough wind off-shore to power US. "There is as much wind power potential (900,000 megawatts) off our coasts as the current capacity of all power plants in the United States combined..."

<http://www.capecodtoday.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=0246>

[http://www.mtpc.org/renewableenergy/press/pr\\_9\\_30\\_05\\_wind.htm](http://www.mtpc.org/renewableenergy/press/pr_9_30_05_wind.htm)

From Ross Vincent, Doug Grinbergs, and others.

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### **Lawsuit Alleging Katrina Damage Made Worse by Oil Company Eco- Destruction**

"The lawsuit... alleges that the major oil companies' oil, gas and pipeline exploration and drilling activities ... resulted in ecological damages to such an extent that coastal marshes were destroyed which previously had protected New Orleans naturally from Katrina level hurricane force winds and tidal surges."

<http://www.enn.com/biz.html?id=1078>

(Can lawsuits on damages from climate change against coal-fired power plants be far behind? - Ken)

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### **Iowa City Public Power Campaign (Municipalization)**

Iowa City, Iowa is holding an election to municipalize.

"The customers of (Mid-American, an investor-owned utility (IOU)) ... are concerned about their utility's rate increases, service and reliability problems. They are concerned about their IOU's failure to commit sufficient resources to local projects in the areas of economic development, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. Their IOU ... is headquartered

thousands of miles away in another state... is more focused on cutting costs and maximizing profits than on customer satisfaction and the local community's goals."

<http://www.icpublicpower.org/>

From Charlie Stevens.

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### **More New Technology Solar Electric Cells (Photovoltaics - PV)**

Thermo-photovoltaic:

[http://www.12three.com/pls/htmldb/f?p=143:8:12219551569602783829::NO::P8\\_ID:51](http://www.12three.com/pls/htmldb/f?p=143:8:12219551569602783829::NO::P8_ID:51)

Plastic PV:

<http://www.engineer.ucla.edu/news/2005/plasticsolarcells.html>

From Morey Wolfson and Premena.

(This is the end of BREEE News)

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