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### ***New Report: Wisconsin Solar Jobs Held Steady During Pandemic***

On May 6, the [Solar Energy Industries Association \(SEIA\)](#), The Solar Foundation, and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council released the [2020 National Solar Jobs Census](#). Solar jobs in Wisconsin held steady throughout 2020, despite the 6.7% decline in the national workforce from 2019.

Nationally, the solar industry employed 231,474 workers in 2020. The report tracks all solar jobs in residential and utility-scale construction, as well as all supply chains. It includes anyone who spends 50% or more of their time working on solar-related activities.

According to the Solar Jobs Census, solar employment figures in the Badger state saw a slight improvement from last year's figures. Across the state, jobs were up from [2,871 in 2019](#) to [2,910 in 2020](#). Wisconsin is ranked #26 nationally for all solar-related employment.

"We have brought on 12 electricians since the beginning of 2021, a 15% hiring increase. 2020 was a busier year for solar than 2019; we did NOT slow down because of the pandemic!" Jesse Michalski, Project Manager, Eland Electric, Green Bay. He went onto say that "2021 is on track to be busier than 2020."

While overall national solar employment dropped, the Solar Jobs Census results did show favorable numbers in specific categories. Diversity in the workforce increased, mainly among women but also among Blacks, Asians, Latinos, and Hispanics. Additionally, the Census demonstrated that pay rates for solar jobs were comparable or higher than the U.S. averages for similar occupations in energy and construction industries.

Productivity in solar showed significant growth in 2020. Record amounts of solar installations occurred last year as the total U.S. capacity increased by over 19,000 megawatts. A vast majority (73%) of the

installed solar capacity was utility-scale, but residential solar productivity also increased by 19% nationwide.

Here in Wisconsin, our solar installation totals set records last year. The completion of the Two Creeks solar farm in Manitowoc County was part of over 200 megawatts of solar that came online in 2020.

“Wisconsin’s cumulative solar capacity more than doubled in 2020,” said Heather Allen, RENEW Wisconsin’s Executive Director.

Wisconsin residential solar installations also increased in 2020.

“Over 10 megawatts of solar were installed on homes last year compared with approximately 5 megawatts in 2019. Focus on Energy saw nearly a tripling of requests for residential solar incentives, going from around 700 reservations to over 2,000,” said Sam Dunaiski, Program Director, RENEW Wisconsin. He added, “This surge in solar adoption was likely due to people spending more time in their homes, recognizing their energy consumption habits, and seeking to reduce their utility bills.”

While the Wisconsin job totals are reassuring, significant workforce growth is still needed. According to SEIA, “the solar industry is on a trajectory to reach 400,000 solar jobs by 2030,” but “employment will need to exceed 900,000 workers by 2035 to reach the 100% clean electricity goal set by President Biden.”

Approximately 2,450 megawatts of generation are expected to come online in Wisconsin over the next 3-5 years. We will need to scale up our solar workforce in that timeframe to complete these projects.

Stanley Minnick, Solar Experience & Branch Manager at Arch Electric, spoke about solar job opportunities in Wisconsin. “Homeowners and business owners appreciate the fact that their investment in solar helps create family-supporting, green collar careers right in their own backyard. There are ample opportunities for folks right out of high school and opportunities for people whose work was impacted by the pandemic as well. If someone is motivated to work hard and wants to be part of the climate solution, there is no better time to put on a hard hat and get to work.”

Heather Allen added, “Wisconsin’s solar industry offers an unparalleled opportunity to grow our clean energy workforce and reinvest millions in our local economies.”

### ***About RENEW Wisconsin***

***RENEW Wisconsin*** is a nonprofit organization that promotes solar power, wind power, biogas, local hydropower, geothermal energy, electric vehicles, and energy storage in Wisconsin. More information can be found at [www.renewwisconsin.org](http://www.renewwisconsin.org).