Town of Boone

PRESS RELEASE

To: All Local Media
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Town of Boone Designated "SolSmart Gold" for Advancing Solar Energy Growth
The Town of Boone has received the "SolSmart Gold" designation from the national
SolSmart program for making it faster, easier, and more affordable for homes and
businesses to go solar.

In addition to the designation, Boone has also earned a Special Recognition Award for
earning over 60% of the available points in both the Permitting & Inspection and
Community Engagement criteria categories. As a SolSmart Special Recognition Award
winner, the Town of Boone joins an exclusive and diverse group of communities across the
U.S. who have not only satisfied the minimum requirements, but exceeded the high
standards established by the SolSmart Criteria Advisory Committee.

"The Town of Boone continues to lead the way and serve as an example of how local
government can partner with citizens to expore new and exciting ways to prepare for our
future. I'm especially proud of our staff who have worked to implement this program and
help Boone take one step further along the path of sustainability," John A. Ward III, Town
Manager.

This designation recognizes the Town of Boone for taking bold steps to encourage solar
energy growth and remove obstacles to solar development. For companies looking to
expand, a SolSmart Gold designation is a signal that the Town of Boone is "open for solar
business."

SolSmart is led by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and the International
City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the U.S. Department of
Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. More than 400 cities, counties, and small towns
have achieved SolSmart designation since the program launched in 2016.

Through many steps, which include, the adoption of regulatory ordiances which clearly
allow accessory solar energy systems in all zoning districts, the waiver of permit fees for
those systems, and participation in community conversations about the importance of
alternative energy sources, the Town of Boone is helping to reduce the cost of installations
and pass those savings on to consumers. This allows even more local homes and businesses
to obtain affordable, clean, and reliable electricity through solar. The actions the Town of
Boone has taken will help encourage solar companies to do business in the area, driving
economic development and creating local jobs.

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As of February 2022, all Town of Boone municipal electricity is generated using 100% renewable energy sources; this is possible with the partnership between the Town's two energy providers, Appalachian State's New River Light and Power (NRLP) and Blue Ridge Energy (BRE).

The Town of Boone has recently adopted changes to the permitting and inspection process which clearly allows accessory solar energy systems in all zoning districts and has implemented a free single online permit for all accessory solar energy systems. To learn more, please visit the Town of Boone's [Accessory Solar Energy Systems-Permitting & Inspections](#) webpage.

To receive designation, cities and counties make changes to their local processes to reduce the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system. This includes evaluating local permitting processes, as well as planning and zoning procedures. SolSmart designees also develop innovations in areas such as market development and finance.

SolSmart uses objective criteria to award communities points based on the actions they take to reduce barriers to solar energy development. Communities that take sufficient action are designated either gold, silver, or bronze.

As part of the SolSmart program, a team of national experts provides no-cost technical assistance to help communities achieve designation. All municipalities, counties, and regional organizations are eligible to join the SolSmart program and receive this technical assistance. Interested communities can learn more at [SolSmart.org](#).