

## Presentation to offer information on shared solar for those who can't do their own installation

BY ALAN JOURNET

Think you can't go solar? Think again! Join us on January 19 in Jacksonville to find out how you can score huge savings from solar energy even if you cannot install panels on your own home.

Renewable energy is becoming ever cheaper and is paying back the investment in its installation more quickly as prices come down and state and federal rebates and credits encourage it. The average payback time in the US is some 10 years with an annual savings of around \$2,000. Since solar panels have a life expectancy of more than 25 years and generally require minimal maintenance, the average homeowner could get many years of pure gravy in terms of financial savings.

The catch is that not everyone can install solar panels on their roof. Some roofs are shaded or have the wrong orientation, some roofs are old and in need of repair so cannot support the panels. Some families live in apartment buildings or rent their homes and cannot install panels, even if they are interested. But there is a solution!

Thanks to legislation passed by the Oregon legislature several years ago, it is now possible for those of us who cannot install solar panels to invest in a community solar project and achieve the same goals. The strategy involves some generous individual(s) or entrepreneur(s) acquiring real estate that is amenable to solar generation and is near electricity grid access to install a field of solar panels and inviting others to invest in them. The result is that the solar farm, including our solar panels, is cheaper to build because of economies of scale, leading to additional savings for residents. It pumps electricity into the grid that replaces electricity we extract from the grid. So long as the community solar farm is pumping electricity into the same grid from which we take our electricity (for most of us in Jackson County, this means the PacificCorp grid), we have an opportunity to invest in enough solar panels to offset the electricity we use. This opportunity also works for renters who move, since they can continue to reap rewards in their



Energy from solar panels installed on the Oregon Shakespeare Festival workshop building in Talent is distributed to nearby neighbors as part of a community solar project.

new home so long as they remain within the Pacific Power service area.

Solarize Rogue is a local nonprofit that has already perfected this approach. With its partner, the Oregon Clean Power Coop, Solarize Rogue has completed a community solar project featuring panels installed on the roof of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Production Building in Talent. They have pioneered this approach and ironed the wrinkles out. Their first project generates 141 kW and powers the homes of 16 Rogue Valley residents. The project also includes providing service to two low-income valley residents.

Solarize Rogue is now scaling up. Their next project will be in Chiloquin and will again serve the Pacific Power Utility area. Thus, anyone who is served by Pacific Power will be eligible to invest in the new project and reap the benefits.

The Jacksonville Climate Action Team of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now is partnering with Solarize Rogue to bring information about this opportunity to Jacksonville and the Applegate Valley. Ray Sanchez-Pescador, President of Solarize Rogue and a major driving force behind the first certified project in Pacific Power territory and the first "participant-owned" project in the state, will lead a discussion of how Jacksonville and Applegate Valley residents can benefit from this project. The public meeting will be held from 5:30-7 pm Thursday, January 19, at the Jacksonville Public Library. (This event is neither sponsored by nor endorsed by Jackson County Library Services.)

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## New book deals with old murder in the Applegate

BY LESLIE GHIGLIERI

I am excited to introduce my book *The Decision to Kill: A True Crime Story of a Teenage Killer and the Mother Who Loved Him*, released in June, that tells the story of a murder that took place in the Applegate Valley in October 1986.

I wrote this book to fulfill a promise I made to my friend Cherie Wier, whose story fills the pages. In 2016, Cherie asked me to document the story of her husband's murder by their teenage son. The book tells of the crime, but the story is about more than a murder.

For years, Cherie struggled to overcome the consuming grief she suffers from the loss of her husband and the difficulty she faces as she attempts to forgive her son, Dwayne. The courtroom accounts of gruesome details and the shocking testimonies from experts add to Cherie's desire to make sense of the crime. Tormented by wanting to know *why* this tragedy happened, she wonders if she could have prevented it.

This book gives the reader an unusual look into the personal circumstances leading up to and after the crime. Cherie shares intimate details of her family's struggles with substance abuse and a mental health disorder—the mistakes, disappointments, and tensions that led to the crime. Included are excerpts from letters written by the convicted teen revealing his battle with addiction, sexual identity, and his search for faith.

Readers are challenged to conclude for themselves whether positive change is possible for violent sociopaths.

*The Decision to Kill* is an unusually personal true crime story because it

is told to the author by the mother herself and contains excerpts from letters written to her by her killer son while he is in prison. The crime reader will appreciate the rare insight this book provides into what the murderer himself describes as his "twisted mind." The killer hints at the formation of "the decision" he made and how that one decision forever altered the course of many lives.

Dwayne's ever-changing views will challenge readers to decide if there is hope for true, positive change in violent sociopaths.

My writing of the book was informed by my career in law enforcement, which began at a 911 Center in Santa Cruz County, California. Relocating to Oregon, I joined the Josephine County Sheriff's Department and later provided computer services to local criminal justice agencies.

*The Decision to Kill* is available locally at Devitt Winery (on Highway 238 between Ruch and Applegate), Rebel Heart Books in Jacksonville, and Bloomsbury Books in Ashland.

A portion of all sales goes to the Restoring Our Community (ROC) Recovery Center, a faith-based organization in Medford serving Jackson and Josephine counties that provides help to those dealing with substance addiction and their families. This center provides the kind of help that Cherie looked for but couldn't find when she was dealing with her own addicted son.

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