

CITY OF COUNCIL BLUFFS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNCIL BLUFFS RECEIVES SOLSMART GOLD DESIGNATION

The City of Council Bluffs receives a Gold designation from the national SolSmart program for making it faster, easier, and more affordable for homes and businesses to go solar.

This designation recognizes the City of Council Bluffs 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 Council Bluffs is “open for solar business.”

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

Using the sun as a renewable energy source, solar energy improves environmental quality by reducing carbon emissions and air pollution, supporting local solar companies in Iowa, saving energy costs, and improving electric grid resilience during peak demand.

“The Community Development Department is committed to exceptional customer service as it relates to solar processes,” said Community Development Director Brandon Garrett. “We are proud to be a SolSmart Gold city and will continue to promote the advancement of solar in our community by helping residents and businesses efficiently and successfully go solar.”

As a SolSmart designee, the City of Council Bluffs helps solar companies reduce the cost of installations and pass those savings on to consumers, therefore allowing more homes and businesses to obtain affordable, clean, and reliable electricity through solar.

“In pursuit of this SolSmart Gold designation, we evaluated our permitting processes and planning and zoning procedures,” said Garrett. “We made the necessary changes to our processes, ensuring that time and money to permit weren’t barriers to installing a solar energy system.”

In addition to achieving SolSmart Gold, the City of Council Bluffs was presented with a Special Recognition Award by SolSmart. SolSmart uses objective criteria to award communities points based on their actions to reduce barriers to solar energy development. The SolSmart Special Recognition Award

celebrates communities that have gone above and beyond – earning at least 60% of the total points available in one or more of the eight SolSmart categories.

The City of Council Bluffs is the only community to receive a SolSmart designation in the Omaha metro area. Council Bluffs is the second city in the state of Iowa and the only community between Cedar Rapids, Iowa and Denver, Colorado to receive a SolSmart Gold designation.

“Earning a Gold designation a great accomplishment,” said Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh. “We are proud of our Community Development Department for taking the initiative, refining their processes, and demonstrating a commitment to renewable energy.”

Council Bluffs residents and business owners can investigate their property’s solar potential through Project Sunroof at sunroof.withgoogle.com. Anyone can estimate the performance of potential photovoltaic projects using the National Renewable Energy Laboratory’s photovoltaic watts calculator at pvwatts.nrel.gov.

The City of Council Bluffs website contains additional information about the City’s solar permitting process as well as where solar is already installed in Council Bluffs. Visit councilbluffs-ia.gov/2460.

Anyone with questions about the City’s solar permitting process can call the Permits and Inspections Division at (712) 890-5276 or the Planning & Zoning Division at (712) 890-5350.

The mission of the City of Council Bluffs is to continuously improve the quality of life and attractiveness of the City of Council Bluffs.