



CLEAN ENERGY NH

Together we build a better future

Melissa Elander is a circuit rider without a horse — but with a mission: to increase energy efficiency across the North Country. As the “energy circuit rider” for Clean Energy NH, she helps communities navigate utility incentives and federal grants and acts as de facto project manager for energy efficiency measures.

Pittsburg now has energy efficient streetlights, the Randolph Town Hall is weatherized, a solar array is powering municipal buildings in Sugar Hill, schools from Gorham to Whitefield have energy efficient lighting. And more. The Foundation’s Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund has supported Elander’s position since its inception in 2019.

As the technology has gotten cheaper and the climate crisis bears down, interest in efficiency continues to rise. Now that the “circuit rider” model has been tested, Clean Energy NH is poised to add another in the Monadnock region and hoping to scale the idea statewide.

Stratford (pop. 662), has a 20-watt solar array on the roof of its town hall. With federal grants and utility rebates, the installation [plus energy efficient lighting

upgrades] cost the town just \$9,512 and is projected to save \$3,162 every year. Stratford, which has among the lowest median household incomes in the state, has weatherized municipal buildings, is planning another solar array and hopes to add electric car charging stations.

“We are in a climate crisis right now, and we all have got to do whatever we can to get our carbon footprint down,” said selectboard member Clayton Macdonald.

And, Macdonald said, the town’s prominent solar array represents important intangibles: Community building. Cooperation. Hope.

On May 1, 2022, as the sun shone across the region, the New England power grid recorded its lowest day of energy demand since 1997. The thousands of solar installations across the six-state area — including the one in Stratford — were credited with that milestone.

Pictured: Clayton Macdonald and Melissa Elander at the Stratford, NH Town Hall.