



Finger Lakes Wine Region to Receive SEIA's *Solar Champion Award*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRANCHPORT, NY - The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) today revealed the Finger Lakes Wine Region will be the latest recipient of its prestigious *Solar Champion Award* – an honor bestowed upon entities or individuals who have helped strengthen solar power in America.

Multiple Finger Lakes wineries including Hunt Country Vineyards, Wagner Vineyards, Dr. Konstantin Frank Vinifera Wine Cellars, O-Neh-Da and Eagle Crest Vineyards, [have turned to solar power](#) for their vineyard operations to collectively save hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy costs while reducing their carbon footprints.

"By taking advantage of solar's cascading costs and proven reliability, these smart New York wineries are taking a giant step toward self-reliance, while saving money and reducing pollution along the way– the embodiment of true solar champions," said SEIA President and CEO Rhone Resch.

"Farming and wine making require a commitment to the land and tradition that spans generations. We see solar as a smart investment in a sector that requires constant innovation," said Suzanne Hunt of Hunt Green LLC and Hunt Country Vineyards. "By installing large solar power systems on our farms and wineries, we are driving environmental benefits for America, while helping to ensure the long-term economic viability of the agricultural sector which sustains us all.

The region's large-scale solar installations will avoid approximately 460 metric tons of harmful carbon emissions a year. Over the lifetime of these systems, that's the equivalent of removing 2,900 cars off New York's roads and highways, or not consuming 1.5 million gallons of gasoline.

Additionally, the projects are boosting the Finger Lakes economy by supporting local construction firms and electrical contractors with an estimated 5,000 man-hours, according to the vineyards, for the installations of American-made photovoltaic solar panels - a number expected to grow as more vineyards follow in the footsteps of the early adopters.

"Going solar gets easier every day," said Tom Kimbis, SEIA's Vice President of Executive Affairs. "Prices continue to fall, people are growing more comfortable with the idea of solar power, and smart policies like the solar investment tax credit (ITC) are helping small businesses become more self-sufficient. That's a win-win-win for wineries, solar companies and New York. We hope the Finger Lakes can serve as a model for wineries, and other small businesses, across the state and the nation."

The 519 megawatts (MW) of solar power currently installed in New York is enough to power 88,000 homes, ranking the Empire State [eighth in the country](#).

SEIA presented the *Solar Champion Award* to the Finger Lakes wine region at [Friday's ribbon cutting](#) in Branchport where a joint solar power installation will be celebrated.

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About SEIA®:

Celebrating its 41st anniversary in 2015, the Solar Energy Industries Association® is the national trade association of the U.S. solar energy industry. Through advocacy and education, SEIA® is building a strong solar industry to power America. As the voice of the industry, SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies to champion the use of clean, affordable solar in America by expanding markets, removing market barriers, strengthening the industry and educating the public on the benefits of solar energy. Visit SEIA online at www.seia.org.

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