



NW Energy Coalition

for a clean and affordable energy future

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NW Energy Coalition to honor young clean energy leaders

*‘4 Under Forty’ to be recognized at Seattle’s Bullitt Center June 12;
honorees hail from utility, contracting and advocacy communities*

SEATTLE – Four young leaders in bringing the benefits of clean and affordable energy to all of us will be feted at the NW Energy Coalition’s 2nd annual **4 Under Forty** celebration the evening of June 12 at Seattle’s Bullitt Center.

This year’s honorees are:

- Tara Anderson, managing director of SustainableWorks
- Jessica Finn Coven, Washington state director of Climate Solutions
- Benjamin Otto, energy associate for the Idaho Conservation League
- Gus Takala, senior energy management engineer for Puget Sound Energy

“These individuals model the passion, diversity and expertise we will need to realize the vision of a truly clean and affordable energy future,” said NW Energy Coalition executive director Sara Patton. “They lead the way ... and prove that we can get there.”

The honorees

Tara Anderson directs Washington state’s largest Community Energy Efficiency Program. SustainableWorks is a non-profit general contractor that does energy audits and helps people improve their homes’ energy efficiency. Under Anderson’s leadership, SustainableWorks has done more than 2,600 energy audits and more than 1,000 home upgrades in the King, Pierce, Snohomish and Stevens counties, saving homeowners \$1.3 million on their utility bills and avoiding 3,600 tons of carbon pollution.

In 2012, Anderson worked with the state to add solar financing to SustainableWorks’ offerings. That program has resulted in more than 100 kilowatts of photovoltaic power on area homes. Energy efficiency remains No. 1, however. As Anderson often says, “you have to eat your energy efficiency before you get your solar cookie.”

Jessica Finn Coven, in the words of a co-worker, is “a relationship-builder, policy advocate and champion of climate and social justice.” She brought her economics degree and Greenpeace and U.S. Climate Action Network campaign experience to Climate Solutions in

2007. Since then, she has been central to virtually every clean energy/climate advocacy effort in the Northwest.

She helped forge the agreement to transition the Centralia, Wash., power plant off of coal while providing help to affected workers and the community. She has made and strengthened partnerships with labor, utilities and businesses over energy efficiency, clean renewables development, climate and green job creation. And she's a stalwart defender of Clean Energy Initiative 937 every year in Washington's state legislature.

In Boise, they call **Ben Otto** "Captain Kilowatt." That's because of the Idaho Conservation League advocate's relentless pursuit of progress on clean energy, particularly energy efficiency. He led the campaign to continue Idaho Power Co.'s residential and irrigation efficiency programs, bringing diverse interests and technical experts before Idaho regulators to counter misinformation about the value of net metering.

A frequent intervenor in Idaho Public Utilities Commission cases, Otto has impressed commissioners with his professionalism, thought-provoking questions and knowledge. He helped found the Idaho Clean Energy Association and serves on that group's board.

Gus Takala's list of lead responsibilities for Washington state's largest utility is truly staggering. He manages Puget Sound Energy's program that invests in energy efficiency upgrades for industries and other large power users. He's the engineering lead for bringing custom energy efficiency improvements to multi-family residences. He's in charge of upgrading PSE's production and distribution system efficiency in accordance with I-937.

The list goes on. The bottom line is that since 2007, Takala has put his graduate engineering degree with emphases on renewable energy and sustainable design to good work in building and delivering PSE's energy efficiency programs. And he's just getting started.

These four individuals, along with 25 other deserving nominees, provide models, hope and inspiration for building a strong and vibrant clean energy economy.

The event

The young clean energy leaders will tell their stories at the **4 Under Forty** celebration from 5:30-7 p.m., Thursday, June 12, at the Bullitt Center, 1501 E. Madison St., in Seattle. The event is a fundraiser to support the NW Energy Coalition's work for clean and affordable energy solutions across the region. Tickets are \$50 and include appetizers and drinks.

Two other awards will be handed out that night. The Coalition will give its first-ever **Doug Still Memorial Organizing Award** to Sierra Club senior regional representative Kathleen Ridihalgh. And the Coalition's coveted **Headwaters Award** – appropriately enough given the event venue – will go to the Bullitt Foundation. CEO Denis Hayes, will accept the award.

To register, go to www.nwenergy.org/4underforty

The NW Energy Coalition is a leading advocate for policies promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, consumer and low-income protections and restoration of fish and wildlife affected by Northwest power production.

