

Machinist Tom Ullmann helps power public events using solar

Tom Ullmann, a 29-year member of Machinists Lodge 1005 and a lead general mechanic for the City of Portland, powered last month's Portland RiverFest and Portland Triathlon at Waterfront Park with 100 percent solar power.

His company, Solar REgards, set up three mobile solar generators that supplied electricity to the official race timing system, RiverFest stage, a medical tent, the race awards presentation stage, vendor booths, computers, printers, and a power strip for recharging cell phones and cameras.

"This is the first time that I know of that one company has powered two events simultaneously using solar," Ullmann said.

A self-described renewable energy application designer, Ullmann has worked for the City of Portland's Office of Transportation since 1982.

In 1995, through his job with the city, he collaborated with PGE to design the nation's first mobile solar generators for a municipality. Portland operates two mobile solar generated vehicles — an environmental emergency investigation van and a traffic meter installation and repair van.

Ullmann has been providing renewable energy power for community events through his own business for



Tom Ullmann, a member of Machinists Lodge 1005 and a lead general mechanic for the City of Portland, applauds triathletes as they cross the finish line in the Portland Triathlon, held Aug. 21 at Waterfront Park. Ullmann supplied three mobile solar generators that he designed that generated all the power for the triathlon, as well as the Portland RiverFest, which was held simultaneously at the park.

about five years.

"It started with 300 watts of union made photovoltaic panels mounted in the back of my union-made Toyota Tacoma pickup," he said.

He said his business has grown as the city moved to reduce the usage of its vans for public events.

He designed a hybrid (wind and solar) renewable energy trailer using the

equipment mounted on his off-the-utility grid house in Mosier, Oregon, near Hood River.

"So now I can power larger events and am still able to take clean/quiet power back to my vacation home, too," he said.

He came up with a name for his company last summer while providing renewable energy power for Metro's booth at Sunday Parkways.

"I came up with the name of Solar REgards, as I used it to sign-off on with my e-mails," he said. "Now I have four mobile solar generator systems and a 100 station charging trailer for cell phones, laptops, Garmin GPS, and cameras."

Now Ullmann is designing new re-

newable energy equipment for emergency management communications and outdoor lighting systems.

"So when the grid goes down, my RE systems will be up," he said.

Ullmann plans to retire from the city in December. As soon as he does, he will begin applying for grants from the Oregon Lottery or possibly the Portland Development Commission to start his own manufacturing business using Northwest-made products and labor.

"I'll be marketing this technology to businesses and states, like Hawaii, who have interest to compete with the high cost of power there and other power-challenged areas past our borders."

For more information, Ullmann can be reached at 503-522-7728.

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