



PLUGGED IN JUNE 2025

Power for Good

Welcome to the June edition of 3CE's Plugged In newsletter! Summer is in full swing, and so is clean-energy innovation across the Central Coast. In this issue, we spotlight a Santa Barbara nonprofit making a difference with an all-electric Ford Lightning purchased in part with funding from 3CE, and we celebrate the bright minds participating in our Future Leaders Internship Program. We also share some expert EV charging tips that explain how timing your charge can maximize both savings and sustainability. Read on to learn more!

In this newsletter, you'll find:

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3CE Helps Power Santa Barbara's Community Resilience



Bucket Brigade CEO & Cofounder Abe Powell and 3CE Sr. Advisor of Policy & Legislative Affairs Das Williams

Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) is dedicated to helping electrify the homes, businesses, and transportation in the communities we serve. On June 8, 3CE staff joined the Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade at their annual Golden Shovel Awards Party to celebrate the group's new all-electric vehicle.

The Bucket Brigade is a nonprofit that began after the Jan. 9, 2018 Montecito debris flow disaster, when volunteers came together to dig through mud and help rescue neighbors. What started as an emergency response effort has grown into a long-term community resilience organization that leads projects like disaster recovery, trail building, environmental restoration, and neighborhood cleanups. The group also trains local volunteers to be leaders during future crises. Their focus includes helping underserved areas and building strong community networks.

“The Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade represents the best of what a community can be: people coming together to take care of one another, restore the environment, and build a more resilient future,” said Das Williams, Senior Advisor of Policy and Legislative Affairs at 3CE. “Their work is rooted in equity, stewardship, and collective action — values that align deeply with 3CE’s mission. I’m proud that we can support their efforts to create lasting, positive change.”

3CE supported the group’s work with a \$5,000 sponsorship and a \$2,000 rebate for an all-electric Ford Lightning pickup truck — and the Bucket Brigade was able to power the whole Golden Shovel Awards event using the truck’s battery. Bucket Brigade CEO and Cofounder J. Abraham Powell said, “the all-electric Ford Lightning truck helps us power our tools and move volunteers and supplies to our project sites. It also helps reduce our carbon footprint as we work to build climate-resilience in Santa Barbara County. With 3CE’s help, we finally have a vehicle we can rely on to support the community in times of need.”

Future Energy Leaders: 3CE Summer Interns Are Here!

Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) is proud to welcome the newest participants to our Future Leaders Internship Program! This summer, four talented interns are gaining hands-on experience across our Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Luis Obispo offices, with a potential fifth intern joining later in the season.

Our interns are working alongside 3CE staff to support clean energy initiatives, learn about community choice energy, and grow as future professionals in public service. From communications to data, finance, and everything in between, each intern is making a meaningful contribution to our mission of delivering clean, local energy and building a more resilient Central Coast. We’re thrilled to have them on board and can’t wait to see how they grow this summer!

3CE in the Community

EDC Green and Blue: A Coastal Celebration



3CE sponsored this celebration of our Coast and the environmental champions who steward it. This year's event in Goleta on June 8 was the Environmental Defense Center's biggest fundraiser to date, with more than 600 attendees showing their energy and passion for protecting our communities and the natural world we all share. Guests enjoyed silent and live auctions, food and drink, music, and the annual Environmental Hero awards presented this year by Julia Louis-Dreyfus.

Santa Ynez Valley Economic Summit



Central Coast Community Energy staff attended the Santa Ynez Valley Economic Summit hosted by the Solvang Chamber of Commerce on June 5 to learn about the current state of agriculture, tourism, and small business in the Santa Ynez Valley.

Energy Advisor: Why Midday is the Best Time to Charge Your EV

If you are an EV driver in California, it might seem like common sense to plug in your car overnight. After all, electricity is typically cheaper, and your car can charge while you sleep. But if your goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make the most of California's clean energy resources, there is a better option: Charge your EV in the middle of the day. Here's why.



When You Charge Matters as Much as How You Drive

California's electric grid has made incredible strides toward clean energy, with more solar and wind power available than ever before. But the type of electricity flowing through the grid changes throughout the day — and so does how much pollution it creates.

Many people assume that charging an EV late at night is the most climate-friendly option, but data from the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) shows it's more complicated. While evening hours (6 pm to 9 pm) tend to have the highest carbon emissions due to peak demand and limited renewable energy, the middle of the night (12 am to 4 am) often has the second-highest emissions. In some spring months, charging in the middle of the night can actually result in more emissions than charging during the evening peak.

The Carbon Curve: Solar Up, Fossil Down

The reason is simple: solar energy. California produces a massive amount of solar power -- so much, in fact, that during midday hours (roughly 10 am to 2 pm), solar can meet or exceed the state's electricity demand. During this time, the carbon emissions from electricity generation are at their lowest. Charging your EV then taps directly into this clean, abundant resource.

In contrast, by midnight, solar production has long since dropped to zero. And while some energy storage discharges into the grid during the evening to help balance demand, there's often not enough stored renewable energy left by the middle of the night. As a result, natural gas and other fossil fuels step in to fill the gap, leading to higher emissions.

Clean Power, Clean Commute

Charging midday not only reduces emissions today, doing so also supports a cleaner grid tomorrow. Using more electricity during the solar peak helps prevent curtailment (when solar power goes unused), encourages further investment in daytime renewables, and aligns your energy use with California's clean energy goals.

Of course, not everyone can shift their charging to the middle of the day. But if you have workplace charging or the ability to schedule your home charger, you can make a significant impact with a simple change in habit.

A Smart Habit for a Smarter Grid

Switching your EV charging time might seem like a small change, but across the state, these kinds of adjustments add up — helping California transition to a cleaner, more efficient energy system. It's an easy way to align everyday convenience with broader environmental benefits, whether or not you consider yourself deeply involved in climate issues.

Want to see how your energy use impacts the grid? Visit CAISO's Today's Outlook to explore real-time data on electricity sources and carbon intensity.

The bottom line: If you are in California and want to reduce your carbon footprint, don't plug in at midnight. Instead, charge your EV when the sun is shining. It is better for the grid, better for the planet, and better for the future we are all driving toward.

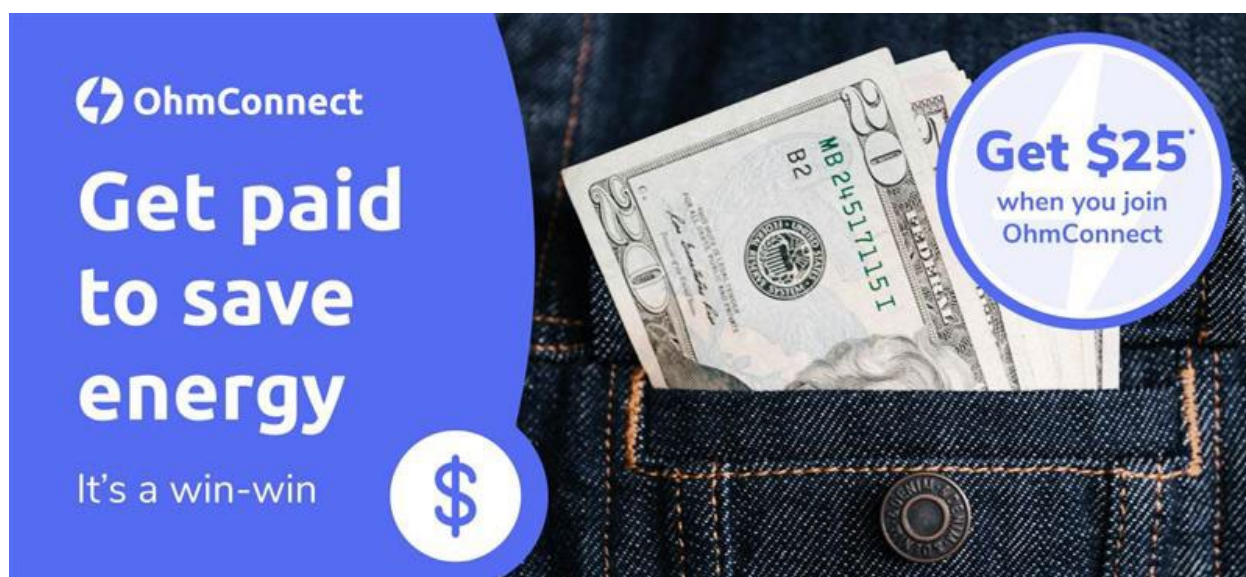
- Schedule your EV charger for 10 am to 2 pm, when California's grid is powered by the most solar energy. Many EVs and chargers let you set this automatically.
- Charge at work if your workplace offers midday charging stations — this can be one of the easiest ways to align your charging with solar output.
- Consider installing battery storage; this can both lower your electricity costs and ease demand on the grid.

Upcoming Events

3CE staff are active in the community and we hope to see you at one of these upcoming meetings and events.

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| 7/9 | <u>Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District Electric Off-Road Equipment Demo</u> | Allan Hancock College, 1300 South College Drive, Santa Maria |
| 7/9 | <u>California Climate and Energy Collaborative Forum</u> | Signia by Hilton San Jose, 170 South Market St. |
| 7/17 | <u>Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Excellence Awards</u> | Embassy Suites, 1441 Canyon Del Rey, Seaside |

Automatically Lower Your Bill & Get Rewards



3CE has partnered with OhmConnect, a free service that will alert you when electricity prices spike in your area due to high demand so you can conserve energy, ultimately lowering your electric bill while you earn rewards. It takes just two minutes to join, and you can also get exclusive discounts on smart-home tech and win prizes!

[Sign Me Up!](#)

Upcoming 3CE Board Meetings

Central Coast Community Energy encourages public participation in agency meetings, held in person and on ZOOM with available dial-in options. Attendees may provide live public comments remotely through Zoom or submit them in advance via email at publiccomments@3ce.org. Sign up to receive public board notices that include meeting details.

[Dates and Livestream Info](#)