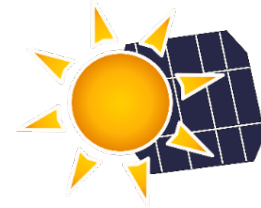


MN Solar for Schools program

Solar events, tours and/or ribbon cutting planning checklist



I. Designate your event planner/coordinator

II. Plan the ribbon cutting event agenda

- Identify an emcee/master of ceremony
- Identify VIP speakers (superintendent, school board, PTA, city and county officials, legislators, local utility, installer, labor and construction representatives)
- Identify student speaker(s)
- Identify individual to cut the ribbon
- Set event date, time and rain date
- Determine schedule and duration for the program
- Identify tour guide(s) with technical expertise to describe the solar system (possibly students)
- If providing a tour of the system, conduct a rehearsal to determine the time required

III. Delegate tasks and responsibilities for event personnel

- Arrange parking and identify parking assistants/greeters/ushers
- Arrange for catering (coffee is nice but not necessary)
- Setup and cleanup arrangements for pre- and post- event
- Designate a contact person for guest RSVPs
- Identify VIP coordinators/contact people
- Assist VIPs with drafting their remarks
- Prepare a media kit with a press release, photos and captions, video id possible, etc.
- Contact local media, public officials, chamber of commerce, etc.
- Contact regional CERTs team, renewable energy industry advisory board members
- Contact utility partners and regional energy stakeholders
- Contact school board members and city officials
- Photographer/videographer if possible

IV. Organizing the space

- Pre-determine space/room layout (where to place tables, chairs, podium, etc.)
- Check space occupancy limits to accommodate expected attendance headcounts
- Provide wayfinding signage to help those unfamiliar with campus to find the event location
- Arrange for podium, backdrop, tablecloths, banners, etc. branded with school logo
- Plan and test the setup of any audio-visual equipment you will be using
- Prepare any materials needed for the event (visuals, posters, project fact sheets, photos, etc.)
- Prepare an information table to distribute print materials (fact sheets, program brochures, etc.)
- Obtain or print signs or banners with logos of solar project contractors and supporting partners
- Provide nametags for guests
- Secure ceremonial ribbon & large scissors for cutting (school or local chamber may already have these)
- Other decorations, balloons, etc. as appropriate



V. Invitations

- Design invitations
- If creating hardcopy invitations, determine the deadline to get invitations to printer
- Prepare printed mailing labels
- Set target date to mail/e-mail/fax invitations
- Prepare guest list
- Date to call or send reminders
- Prepare press release
- Identify dates to contact local media
- Notify media, example below:

“The community is invited to a ribbon cutting on [DATE] celebrating the completion of the solar panel installation at [SCHOOL NAME] High School as part of the MN Solar for Schools program. Our school received a MN Solar for School grant from the Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources.”

The ribbon cutting ceremony begins at 4 p.m. in the [SCHOOL NAME] High School commons area. Guests are asked to enter the Commons area off Carlyon Avenue.

The project features more than [500] rooftop solar panels.

Superintendent [NAME], school board members and other local dignitaries are expected to attend. No school board business will be conducted at this event.”

VI. Post-Event Tasks

- Distribute media kit and FAQs immediately at the conclusion of the event to local media so they can add the story to that day’s news cycle.
- Send a post-event press release with photos to area media outlets.
- Share your photos/videos by posting them online, social media, school paper, newsletter, etc.
- Send thank-you notes to all of your speakers, sponsors and other VIPs who attended.
- Send thank-you notes to school staff.
- Monitor media coverage, and inform your speakers, sponsors, VIPs and other stakeholders of any stories that feature your ribbon cutting event.
- A job well done!