# A picture containing text Description automatically generatedSolar on Public Buildings grant program, Minnesota Department of Commerce

*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 (administrator, city and county officials, legislators,
  + local utility, installer, labor and construction representatives)
* Identify 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 council/board members and local government 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 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

(local government 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 [Local Government building name] as part of the Solar on Public Buildings program. Our [local government] received a Solar on Public Buildings grant from the Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources.*

*The ribbon cutting ceremony begins at 4 p.m. in the [building name and area]. Guests are asked to enter [the location at…]. The project features more than [xx] rooftop solar panels.*

*Administrator [NAME], council/board members and other local dignitaries are expected*

*to attend. No local government 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, local paper, newsletter, etc.
* Send thank-you notes to all of your speakers, sponsors and other VIPs who attended.
* Send thank-you notes to 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!