

THE CHARGING STATION

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF A²ZERO AND
THE ANN ARBOR OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATIONS



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ABOUT THE EDITOR



Simi Barr (he/him) has worked in Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations since 2020. He's a Senior Analyst who leads the municipal operations team on the decarbonization of City Facilities and operations as well as the expansion of public EV charging infrastructure throughout Ann Arbor. Have questions? Reach out to Simi at SBarr@a2gov.org.



Electric F150 lightning used by the Water department to maintain systems around the City. The fleet contains thirty F-150 Lightnings, which are essential to providing City services.

WELCOME

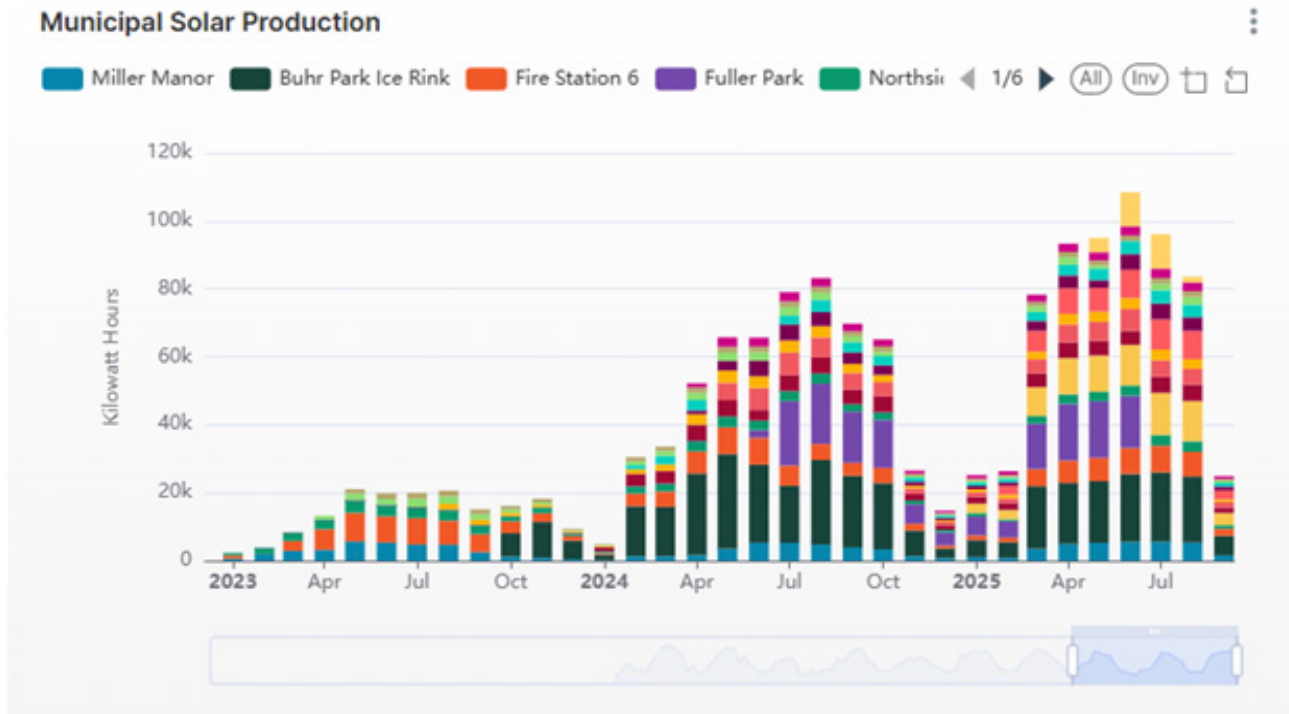
Welcome from the City of Ann Arbor's Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI). In this issue of the Charging Station, OSI is excited to share details about current and upcoming renewable energy and fleet electrification projects, as well as feature a spotlight on the Sustainable Energy Utility's new Executive Director! If you are interested in learning more and how you can get involved, more detail can be found on our website: www.a2gov.org/sustainability. As always, thank you for your interest in sustainability activities in Ann Arbor!

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Equity and justice are at the center of A²ZERO and staff in OSI are continuing to ground our work in these critical principles. In that light, we'd like to take a moment to honor the geographic and historic space we share. We acknowledge that the land the City of Ann Arbor occupies is the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabe and Wyandot peoples. We further acknowledge that our city stands, like almost all property in the United States, on lands obtained, generally in unconscionable ways, from indigenous peoples. The taking of this land was formalized by the Treaty of Detroit in 1807. Knowing where we live, work, study, and recreate does not change the past, but a thorough understanding of the ongoing consequences of this past can empower us in our work to create a future that supports human flourishing and justice for all individuals.

DECARBONIZING CITY FACILITIES

REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS



Municipal Solar Production data is available in [the City's A²ZERO dashboard](#).

The electricity used to power City facilities is the main contributor to Ann Arbor's municipal greenhouse gas footprint, which is reported annually by the Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) through a greenhouse gas inventory. Other contributors include fossil gas burned onsite, and the fuels used to power the City's vehicle fleet. OSI's municipal operations team works to reduce the environmental impact of Ann Arbor City operations through energy related projects at City facilities. By increasing building efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy supply powering City buildings, we can lower the overall climate impact of municipal operations. Since the year 2000, emissions from City operations have been reduced over 40%, and OSI is committed to continue this progress.

Examples of building efficiency and electrification work include lighting and building automation system upgrades at the Wheeler Service Center, Streetlight efficiency upgrades, and HVAC electrification at the City's Election Center. These projects allow staff to more accurately monitor energy use in buildings and lower emissions and utility costs in buildings by using energy more efficiently.

The most visible energy related projects happening at the City are behind-the-meter solar installations that are installed at various City sites. The most recent of these sites is the City's largest installation, a system over 350 kWDC in size at Veteran's Memorial park. This includes a roof-mounted array on the ice rink, along with two carports which provide shade and snow protection for vehicles in the parking lot. Across all facilities, solar systems have produced over 630 MWh of electricity in 2025 alone. Though this, it represents a relatively small portion of overall electricity use for City operations, this is not insignificant. This amount of electricity could power over 75 Michigan homes for a year and has provided tens of thousands of dollars in electricity cost savings annually.

And, [OSI is continuing to move forward with more solar at municipal facilities with a goal of maximizing the value of federal direct pay incentives](#). To date, the City has had over \$500,000 in direct payments from the IRS, in lieu of tax credits. Upcoming sites for solar and battery storage installations include City Hall, Fire Station 1, Fire Station 3, Fire Station 6, Bicentennial Park, the Wheeler Center, Water Recovery Facility, Steere Farm, and the Election Center. At Fire Station 3, the City is relocating a solar carport that was previously located at a DDA lot at 4th and Catherine.

DECARBONIZING CITY FACILITIES

REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS



Small carport previously in the 4th & Catherine parking lot. OSI and the DDA worked together to have the carport decommissioned, and OSI is in the process of relocating the carport to Ann Arbor's Fire Station 3 on Jackson Road.



The City's newest solar carport at Veteran's Memorial Park. Keep an eye out for more solar installations at City Hall, Bicentennial Park, Fire Stations, and more.

In addition to the behind-the-meter renewable energy systems that are being installed at City facilities, in 2025, the City also made a large commitment to procuring renewable electricity through a third party electricity provider. Over 75 City sites are enrolled in a program that provides 100% of their electricity needs via wind and

solar energy. Between this and the on-site solar systems at the City, over 75% of the electricity powering City facilities is renewable. As City facilities become more efficient, and more onsite renewables are installed, less renewable energy will be purchased from third party suppliers.

FLEET ELECTRIFICATION

LESSENING THE IMPACT OF CITY FLEET VEHICLES

The City's vehicle fleet is vital to the proper functioning of the municipality. The fleet is composed of over 350 assets and vehicles which are essential to the services Ann Arbor residents have come to expect from their City government. City fleet vehicles include Fire trucks, police cars, vehicles to get inspectors to job sites, bucket trucks to repair traffic signals, refuse trucks for solid waste collection, salt and plow trucks, and much more.

For over 20 years, City Council has directed staff to monitor and lessen the environmental impact of the City fleet. Improvements have come in many forms, including reducing the number of vehicles in the fleet, reducing the size of vehicles where applicable, and purchasing more fuel-efficient vehicles. Since 2020 and the passage of A²ZERO, City Council has also directed staff to electrify vehicles whenever possible. The energy efficiency of electric vehicles is much higher than fossil fuel alternatives, well over 2 to 1. This means that electrifying vehicles by itself reduces the GHG impact of the fleet even when these vehicles use electricity that is not 100% renewable. However, as discussed in the previous article, the City is installing and procuring more and more electricity from renewable sources, thereby further reducing the environmental impact of the City fleet.

In the years since the council directive toward vehicle electrification, significant progress has been made. Each year, as vehicles are replaced, the City's GreenFleets team identifies EV alternatives that can fit each vehicle's use case. Within the City's light fleet (cars, SUVs, pickup trucks, vans, etc), over 40% of the vehicles are now electric. Fewer truck and heavy equipment EV options exist currently, so electrification within that segment is smaller, with only 6% electrification rate in this market segment. In 2025, the City was excited to receive 4 EV refuse trucks, all partially subsidized by grant funding. Keep an eye out for City vehicles in the future, they very well may be EVs!



One of Ann Arbor's rear load EV refuse trucks operating downtown!

MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF OSI'S MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS TEAM!



Stephen Janoyan is the new Electric Vehicle (EV) Coordinator for the City of Ann Arbor. Stephen's work with OSI focuses on EV planning for the City, including expanding Ann Arbor's EV charging network, and making EVs more accessible to all. Stephen joined the team in June and has since been focused on expanding Ann Arbor's network of affordable and reliable public EV charging through a Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Grant. This project focuses on addressing critical gaps in public charging accessibility, specifically around multi-unit dwellings and low-income areas. Reach out to Stephen to learn more! SJanoyan@a2gov.org

THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY UTILITY

COLLABORATOR SPOTLIGHT ON THE SEU'S NEW DIRECTOR, SHOSHANNAH LENSKI

This month, Shoshannah Lenski invites readers into the growing world of the Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU). The SEU was authorized by Ann Arbor voters on November 5, 2024, to be operated by the City of Ann Arbor as a sustainable, reliable, resilient, 100% renewable, opt-in utility. To learn more about the SEU and to join the email list for the latest updates from Shoshannah herself, please visit a2gov.org/a2seu.



What is the SEU?

The Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU) is Ann Arbor's very own municipal energy utility! With the overwhelming support of voters in the November 2024 election, it was authorized by City Council and "born" in April 2025. It will provide renewable energy services like solar, battery storage, and geothermal energy to city homes and businesses. It is optional and paid for only by those who choose to participate, and supplemental, meaning customers will also still get some of their energy from DTE.

What most excites you about being the inaugural director of the SEU?

First, I'm excited about the opportunity to align our energy future with our community's values and needs. I believe that with the SEU we can have a hometown utility that supports our climate and equity goals, offers affordable and reliable service, and is, quite simply, a pleasure to do business with.

Second, I'm excited that we're building something completely innovative here in Ann Arbor (where some of us – my own kid included - are literally 'Pioneers!'). I love working on 'wicked' problems, and starting a utility from scratch without a playbook is certainly that. The playbook we write here can be a model for communities around the country.

What's currently going on with the SEU? What are we moving toward?

The SEU has a few key priorities for the coming months. We need to secure start-up funding to acquire and build our first energy systems. We need to define our preliminary service offerings that will be available to customers, and set the rates and service terms, so folks can begin to sign up. And we need to be out engaging with the community – this SEU is for the people of our City, so we've got to be listening to and talking with them on the regular.

Who are you and what is your role at the City of Ann Arbor?

My name is Shoshannah Lenski, and I am the inaugural Executive Director of the Ann Arbor Sustainable Energy Utility. I'm also a long-time Ann Arborite (like so many, I came here for grad school and never left) and active community member, having served on the city's Energy Commission and currently on the board of trustees for the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum and Leslie Science & Nature Center.

What were you doing before you joined the City?

For the last two years, I led the Center for Sustainable Systems at U of M, with responsibility for strategy, outreach, and operations, as well as contributing to research related to the energy transition and circular economy. Previously, I spent 12 years in a variety of strategy and operations leadership roles with DTE Energy, working on everything from renewable energy strategy, to metering and billing to field operations. I began my career with the global management consulting firm BCG.

THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY UTILITY

COLLABORATOR SPOTLIGHT ON THE SEU'S NEW DIRECTOR, SHOSHANNAH LENSKI

What might we see or experience in Ann Arbor in 5 years, once the SEU is more established?

In 5 years, we'll have thousands or even tens of thousands of customers getting a large share of their energy needs from the SEU. This energy will be clean, affordable, and resilient in the face of more severe weather events and grid outages. The participants will reflect a diverse cross-section of our city, including renters, businesses and nonprofits, and people across all neighborhoods and income levels.

How is the SEU operated? Is it part of the City?

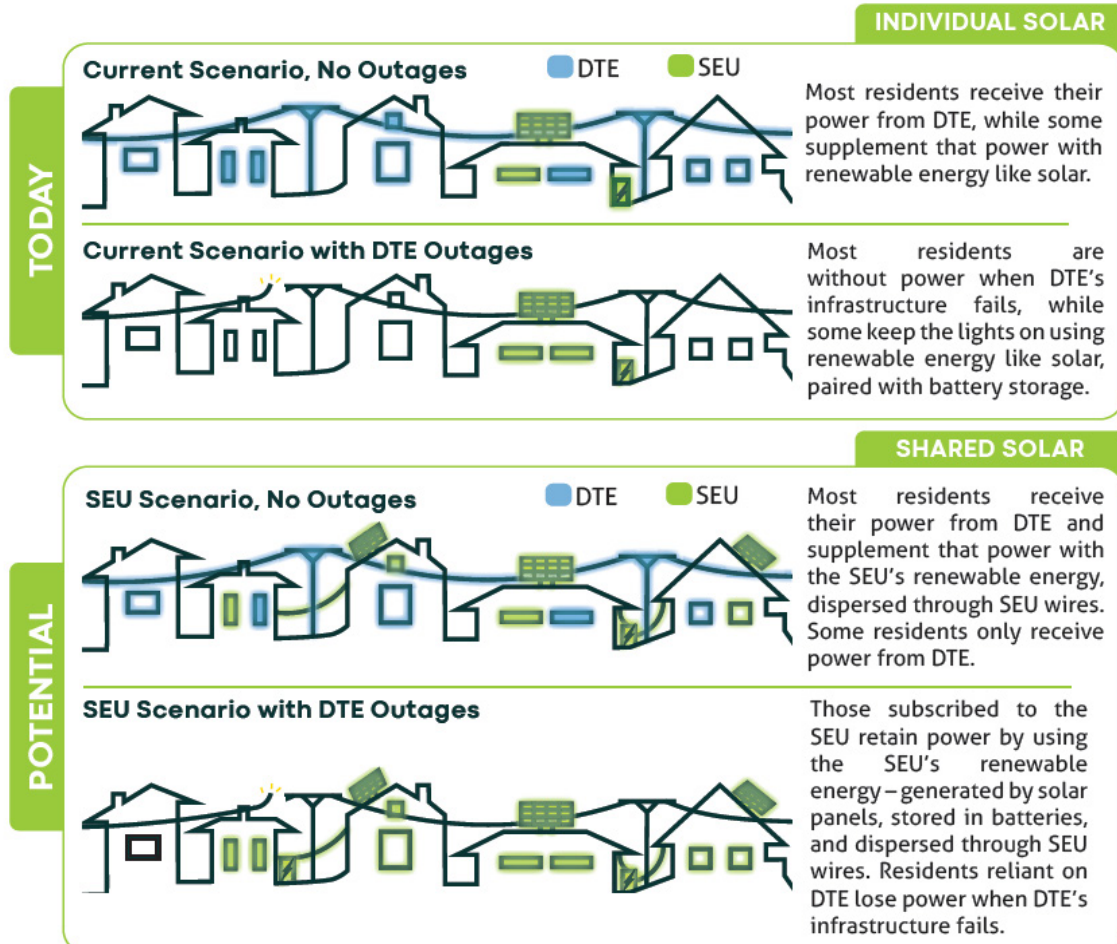
The SEU operates as a department within the City. This allows the SEU to lean on the expertise and support of central resources such as IT, HR, finance, and others. Our elected leaders on City Council have ultimate oversight of the SEU, including setting rates.

How could the SEU support municipal decarbonization efforts?

Nearly 70% of our community's emissions come from buildings' electricity or fossil gas usage. The SEU will help folks convert some of that electric usage to solar energy, and some of the gas usage to more efficient geothermal energy, reducing emissions.

How can people learn more and stay up to date on SEU developments?

The SEU is a baby (remember, it was born in April), so I hope everyone will want lots of pictures and updates as it grows up! ;) [Read more about the SEU here](#) and fill out [a simple expression of interest form \(not a commitment\) here](#).



An infographic demonstrating how the SEU is expected to transform the energy landscape in Ann Arbor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public Invited to Help Name New Mobile Resilience Unit

The City of Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations invites residents to [submit names for its new resilience tool, the Solar Mobile Nanogrid Unit](#). From the Jackson, MI-based company, Sesame Solar, this unit is a fully self-sustaining, solar-powered trailer that's as versatile as it is innovative. Ann Arbor's Unit will serve as more than just a mobile power source; it will also be a hands-on, mobile classroom and community engagement tool aimed at bringing sustainability and resilience education directly to Ann Arbor residents.

Ann Arbor Launches Air Quality Map and Alert System

The City of Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations (OSI) is announcing a partnership with Clarity Movement (Clarity), the manufacturers of its city-wide network of 10 air quality monitors, to launch a new map displaying the current air quality index (AQI) at each of 10 monitoring locations. The new map can be found at www.a2gov.org/airquality and features a way to sign up for email alerts when AQI reaches an "unhealthy" level.

Business Rebates for Electric Leaf Blowers

[Business rebates for electric leaf blowers](#) have been reinstated through September 30, 2026, or until funding is expended. Designed to help lower the cost of transitioning from gas to electric leaf blowers in accordance with Ann Arbor's leaf blower ordinance, these rebates will be available to businesses that provide lawn care or landscaping services to properties located in Ann Arbor.

OSI Made National News: OSI has captured national attention from [NPR for its work in on the Sustainable Energy Utility \(SEU\)](#) and international attention from [the BBC for its work in the Bryant Community](#). This recognition underscores Ann Arbor's leadership in climate action and highlights the power of community-driven solutions to address one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

Get Financial Assistance For Your Home Energy Efficiency Project: As of July 1, 2025, all Home Energy Rebate categories have been refreshed. Categories that ran out of money in the previous fiscal year are open and available to be drawn from again! Learn more and finance your home energy improvements at osi.a2gov.org/rebates.

New Episode of Green Light: Hear from Michelle Bennett, City Planner, and Missy Stults, Director of Sustainability and Innovations for the City of Ann Arbor, discuss the city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and how sustainability elements factor into the Plan. See the episode and all others at osi.a2gov.org/GreenLight.

We're Collecting Sustainability Stories! Want to share your experience making a transition from gas to electric, connecting with the community, swapping your car for a bike, or something else that has made your life more sustainable? We'd love to hear about it! We're collecting stories from residents to help build the movement towards a more sustainable and more equitable future for Ann Arbor. Send an email with your story at sustainability@a2gov.org.

OSI is now on LinkedIn! Connect with us at [City of Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations](#).

For more information on our upcoming events, please visit www.a2gov.org/sustainability/events.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Ann Arbor Solar Stories | *October 2, 7 – 8 PM | Virtual:*

Ann Arbor Solar Stories is an opportunity to come hear from residents or businesses who have gone solar in our community, and ask all your questions! [Register online to join.](#)

Zero Waste Fall Festival - Trash Talk Tour | *October 5, 12 – 3 PM | Kiwanis*

Kiwanis Thrift Sale will be open for shopping! There will be behind the scenes tours of Kiwanis and their incredible operations that save thousands of items from the landfill each year. And, learn more about Ann Arbor's circular economy through local businesses and organizations who will be joining us at Kiwanis. This is a free event and donations are completely optional! All donations go directly towards keeping this event free and open to the public. This event is part of Trash Talk Tour. Make sure to check out our other great events like Ann Arbor's Recycling Facility Tour and the Bike Tour of Ann Arbor's Circular Economy at [TrashTalkTour.Org](#).

OSI at the Farmers Market | *October 8 & 22, 8 AM – 2 PM | Ann Arbor Farmers Market*

Stop by the OSI table at the Wednesday Farmer's Market to say hi, ask questions, and learn about programs, resources, and upcoming events! We look forward to seeing you there.

Electronics Collection | *October 11, registration only*

This program collects unused electronic devices from the Ann Arbor community and prevents them from becoming waste by facilitating reuse, refurbishment/repair, and—as a last resort—recycling of these devices. See the guidelines, register to attend, and more at [a2gov.org/electronics](#).

Monthly Clothing Swap | *October 16, 4 – 7 PM | Council Chambers, City Hall*

Join the Office of Sustainability and Innovations for monthly clothing swaps on the third Thursday of each month! These are a perfect way to give your gently used clothes a new home. And you might just find an item of clothing you have been looking for, without having to buy it new. Special call for costumes! This month, we're putting the spotlight on costumes! As always, we welcome all clean and usable clothing and accessories—but now's the perfect time to bring in those costumes gathering dust in your closet. Wore it last year? Trade it in and pick up a new-to-you costume for this season!

Commercial Resilience Training Workshop | *October 16, 8:30 – 10:30 AM | Ann Arbor SPARK*

Join the Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations on Thursday, October 16 from 8:30–10:30 am for an introduction into commercial preparedness and resilience. Become familiar with how climate change is affecting Michigan, the basics of how to prepare your business for common climate events, and how to personally prepare for these eventualities. Participants will receive free emergency kits for their businesses, information on how to stay informed of emergencies, and guidance on how to take additional action to prevent disasters from becoming catastrophes. This event's capacity is limited, and participants must register here by October 2nd. For questions on this event or on how OSI can further support your business, please reach out to jburnham@a2gov.org.

Veridian Open House | *October 16, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM | Veridian at County Farm*

Join Michigan EIBC for a public convening to discuss the opportunities to leverage rooftop solar, energy storage, demand response resources, and electric vehicle chargers to create virtual power plants. The event will feature expert speakers, a panel discussion, and a tour at Veridian at County Farm, a new neighborhood with solar, storage, and EV chargers. [Learn more and register online.](#)

Park Work Day | *October 17, 3 – 5 PM | Molin Nature Area*

Join OSI and the Ann Arbor Parks Volunteer Program to help protect native habitat at Molin Nature Area! Volunteers will cut invasive shrubs like honeysuckle and buckthorn. This work helps keep Molin healthy and supports a diversity of native plants, birds, and wildlife. [RSVP online](#) and see details for joining on the day of the event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Water@Michigan Coffee Talk - Developing the State of Michigan's Maritime Strategy to Achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2050 | October 21, 3 – 4:30 PM | Michigan Union, 2210 ABC Room:

Coffee Talks provide a monthly opportunity for U-M faculty, staff, and students interested in water, and water-interested people in southeast Michigan to connect with colleagues, learn about pressing and/or emerging water-related issues, and meet new partners. For this talk, come learn about how the State of Michigan is working to achieve carbon neutrality in the maritime sector. [See the details online.](#)

Sustainability and Cinema Film Series: Fashion Reimagined, October 22, 7 – 9:30 PM | Michigan Theater

Free Admission - Please reserve tickets in advance for an accurate attendance. Fashion Reimagined follows Amy Powney, a daughter of environmental activists, during her trajectory from outsider to industry leader as she sets out to create a fashion collection that's ethical and sustainable at every level. See the full line-up and reserve your tickets at marquee-arts.org/cinema-and-sustainability.

Public Works Open House October 25, 10 AM – 1 PM | Wheeler Service Center, 4251 Stone School Road

Join the City's Public Works division for free family-friendly event exploring the world of public works and solid waste! Enjoy hands-on activities to learn about utility infrastructure, city forestry, street maintenance, solid waste, compost, and recycling programs. Activities will include: paint a snow plow; touch a truck; operate a solid waste truck; fix a water main break & clogged sewer; tour the salt dome; crafts; and more!

CONNECT WITH A²ZERO

Click the tiles below to see the latest updates, events, and more!

