



CLIMATE SMART
MISSOULA

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Climate Smart Missoula Honored with \$50,000 Lightship Prize

MISSOULA, Mont. – Climate Smart Missoula was recently awarded the second annual Lightship Prize, in recognition of the organization’s commitment to addressing the climate crisis. The \$50,000 award was bestowed by the JFF Foundation, a private midwestern organization that has focused on basic services, especially for single mothers, and has recently started funding climate action.

“We feel Climate Smart Missoula really stands out in the nation as a community climate organization,” wrote a spokesperson for the JFF Foundation, citing in the award letter that the nonprofit was honored for its “committed work on the urgent problem of climate change.”

The Lightship Prize is a merit-based award, without an application process, and Climate Smart Missoula may use the one-time prize to support its work however it deems appropriate.

“We are committed to building and accelerating climate solutions as quickly as possible, and are often limited by available funding,” said Amy Cilimburg, executive director of Climate Smart Missoula. “We were incredibly surprised and honored to receive such a generous award, which we plan to invest in people and programs. Budgets are always tight for small nonprofits, and this allows us to adjust to inflationary costs and gives us some wiggle room to offer stipends for internships. Importantly this year the prize will help us further our Electrify Missoula campaign.”

[Electrify Missoula](#) is a joint effort with Missoula City and County, spearheaded by Climate Smart Missoula, to reduce emissions, improve health and save energy by helping local residents and businesses transition to efficient electric appliances. The initiative also focuses on efforts to move to cleaner sources of energy feeding into the grid.

According to the JFF Foundation award letter, a lightship was a ship moored at sea whose beacon light warns and guides other ships to avoid dangers. Unlike a lighthouse, it's nimble and can move. Sailors on the ships were charged with alerting and saving others, and in their spare time they wove lightship baskets, creating things of beauty during trying times.

“Any type of weaving reminds us how we’re interwoven with each other and the planet,” the letter states.

The sentiment resonates with Cilimburg.

“We have real solutions and technology to help solve the climate crisis, like heat pumps, solar panels e-bikes, and electric vehicles,” said Cilimburg. “But for these solutions to work, we all must commit to using them. This prize reminds me that there is momentum across the nation and world to come together to make real change happen. And that in itself is a lightship.”



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This is the second prize awarded to Climate Smart Missoula in 2023. Missoula's Clean Energy Workforce Coalition, anchored by Climate Smart, is one of 10 winners of Phase One of the U.S. Department of Energy's Community Clean Energy Coalition Prize, as described in this Feb 15 coalition press release:

https://www.missoulaclimate.org/uploads/4/3/2/6/43267085/prelease_cleanenergyworkforcecoalition_feb2023.pdf.

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Climate Smart Missoula builds and accelerates climate solutions for Missoula and beyond, through collaborative programs, advocacy and catalyzing diverse climate leadership. Since its inception in 2015, Climate Smart Missoula has collaborated with government entities, community groups, individual advocates, and grassroots organizations to create crucial networks, fostering a resilient Missoula and Montana, for this generation and the next.