

ECSU sustainable energy director strives to make state eco-friendly

CLAIRE GALVIN

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

WILLIMANTIC — Reviewing dozens of Connecticut towns' progress in sustainability is no easy feat.

But for the director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University, that task is one she believes in through and through.

Lynn Stoddard worked at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection before arriving as the director of the institute five years ago.

The institute works to be an educational resource in achieving a sustainable energy future for Eastern, but also for the state of Connecticut at large.

As part of her work, she and her team have built from the ground up Sustainable CT, a certification program that recognizes and rewards Connecticut municipalities for their work in sustainability and environmental protection.

The program launched in November 2017 and awarded 22 towns sustainability certificates at the end of 2018, including Windham, Coventry and Hebron.

Communities first register for the program and then track their sustainable efforts before submitting them for

Special Neighbor



Lynn Stoddard of Storrs serves as the director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University. Contributed photo

review every year. Currently, 83 towns are registered.

“Lots of towns are working really hard right now for the

second year’s certification,” Stoddard said.

Towns and cities get credit for obvious eco-friendly

efforts like putting solar panels on town-owned buildings, but also for more obscure efforts that increase equity and inclusion for all town residents, like library reading programs and diverse housing.

“It was really important for us to include inclusion because it’s often left out in programs like these,” Stoddard said. “Equity is looking out into your community and finding who might not be traditionally invited to the table.”

Stoddard has lived in Storrs for about 30 years. In addition to her roles at Eastern, she has also been the chairman of the Mansfield Sustainability Committee for a number of years.

She and her husband own the Adventure Park at Storrs and she spends much of her time up in the trees.

“I’ve always felt I need to get up in the trees to get grounded,” Stoddard said.

Stoddard also practices what she preaches and rides her bicycle to work when the weather allows it, riding past the bucolic farms and fields of Mansfield.

More information about Stoddard or the Institute for Sustainable Energy is available at easternct.edu/sustainableenergy.

Follow Claire Galvin on Twitter - @CGalvinTC.