

COLUMBUS CURRENTS

CEC Announces Solar Project

Columbus Electric Cooperative, (CEC) finalized a 25 year contract with Affordable Solar Installation Inc., (ASI) to supply our Cooperative with renewable energy from a planned 1.85 megawatt solar plant to be constructed just north of the Village of Columbus.



CEC will purchase the entire output of the 1.85MW solar farm over the life of the contract. The plant is expected to come on line in October 2017, producing 5.3 million kWh annually or enough energy to power 700 homes. The plant will be constructed on a 20 acre site north of the Village of Columbus. The site was selected because of its suitability for the project. Based on its proximity to our substation our engineering analysis showed there would be no operational issues. In addition, no mitigation techniques or special technologies will be required for interconnecting the plant to our electric distribution system.

The signing of this agreement with ASI is timely, as the 25 megawatt Alta Luna solar plant located just north and east of Deming is scheduled to come on line this month. Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, our wholesale energy provider, contracted to purchase the entire output of Alta Luna for the next 25 years to serve its members including Columbus Electric. Columbus Electric also provides electric service to the Alta Luna Plant.

CEC's requirements contract with Tri-State affords the opportunity to purchase up to 5% of our energy needs from some other utility scale distributed generation resource. This option enabled us to harness the trend towards solar as a viable energy solution at a time when prices were attractive, turning it into a win for the Cooperative and its members.

CEC and our power supplier Tri-State have embraced the challenge of bringing renewable energy to our members. This local facility is yet another example of our commitment to bring our members services that make a positive and significant impact on the communities we serve.

January 2017 www.columbusco-op.org Vol. 29. No. 2

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

You're in good company with co-ops

Neighbors helping neighbors to create a better world

A fair question people often ask is, "What's in it for me?" This makes sense, as we all need to act in our own self-interest every now and then. The cool thing about co-ops is that we answer the question, "What's in it for me?" with, "This is what's in it for we."

When the market refuses to offer a good or service, or does so at such a high price, co-ops step in to fill the void. Cooperatives identify members of the community who have the same self-interests and bring them together to make a cooperative decision.

70 years ago, when Columbus Electric got started, the folks in our community shared at least one self-interest—they wanted electricity. In fact, many Americans who lived in rural parts of the country needed electricity, which is why electric cooperatives were formed. Individuals acted in their own self-interest, but that self-interest led to the community and economic development of the rural areas in which they lived. Today, rural electric co-ops serve over 42 million people in 47 states.

It is good to know that your friends and neighbors are also your co-owners of our cooperative. People coming together to meet a particular need is at the heart of every kind of co-op. Local credit unions bring financial services to people that banks do not want to serve. In urban areas and college communities, housing co-ops offer people a safe, reliable and affordable place to live.

Many agricultural co-ops started as a way to get their products to market, whether it was oranges (Sunkist), dairy (Land O'Lakes), grapes (Welch's), organic milk (Organic Valley) or any of the hundreds of other food products that co-ops bring to our table every day.

Many people who owned small businesses realized they too had a common self-interest: Stay in business. So they formed purchasing co-ops like Ace Hardware and True Value so they could compete with big-box stores like Home Depot and Lowe's.

Today, it is estimated that more than 40 percent of all residents in the U.S. are members of at least one co-op. Worldwide, well over a billion people are counted as co-op members.

So every time you turn on (or off) the lights, it can serve as a reminder that as a co-op member, you are in good company with your neighbors—and with people all around the world.

LIHEAP Protection Notice

"Protection from winter shut-off ends March 15, 2017"

To avoid potential disconnection of services please, contact the human services department at 1-800-283-4465, or the appropriate tribal or pueblo entity for eligibility information for low-income heating energy assistance program (LIHEAP). Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2016 through March 15, 2017, if you meet the qualifications of LIHEAP and have no past due amounts or you remain current on any settlement or installment agreement for amounts due as of November 15, 2016. Members of New Mexico tribes or pueblos who need help with translation or with other matters may contact the commission's consumer relations division at 1-888-427-5772, who will contact the appropriate tribal or pueblo official for assistance." "Para informacion en español llame 1-800-950-2667."

Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)