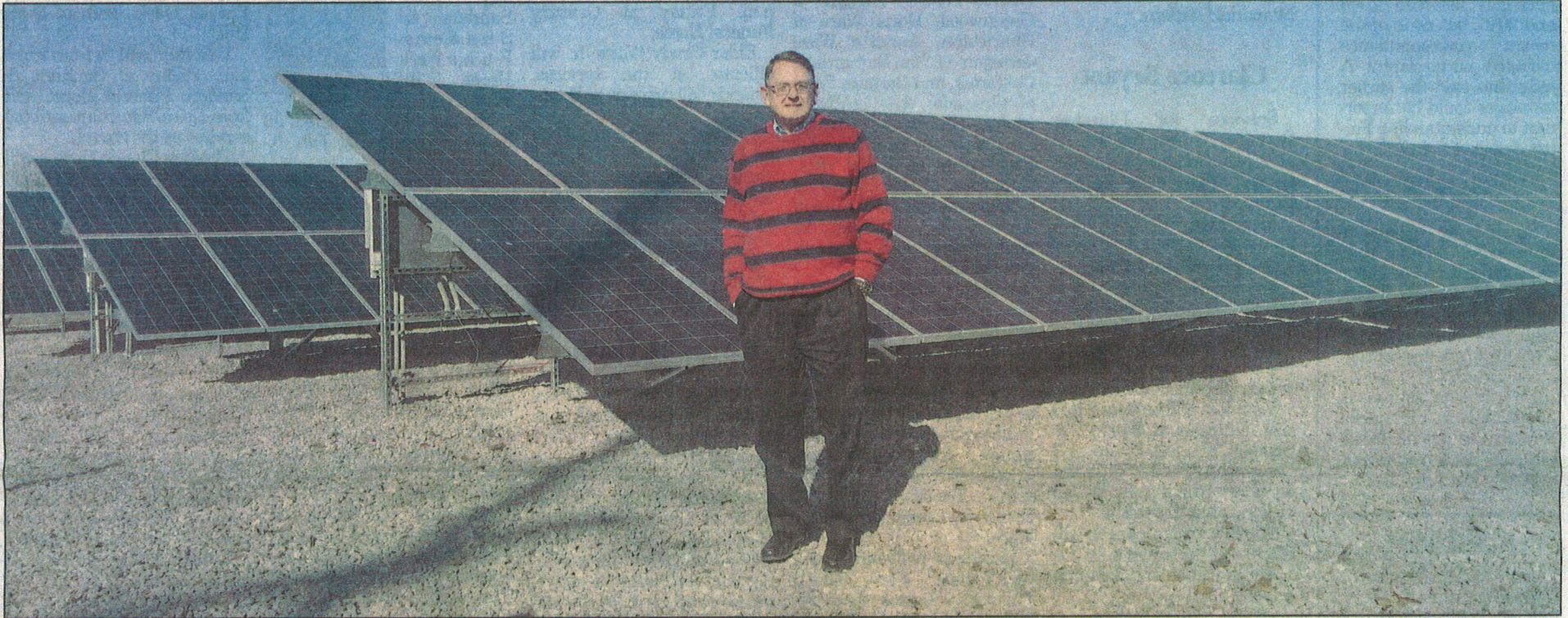


Sun power



Nick Rogers

David O'Bryan, general manager of Delta Electric Power Association, says the solar facility being constructed on Stribling Avenue will begin providing power within the next few weeks.

Delta Electric solar facility set to begin generating electricity

By NICK ROGERS
Staff Writer

Those driving along Stribling Avenue during the past few weeks may have noticed the construction of several hundred solar panels behind the offices of Delta Electric Power Association.

The nearly completed facility is a joint project between the cooperative and its power supplier, Hattiesburg-based South Mississippi Electric (SME), said David O'Bryan, Delta Electric's general manager.

SME is a conglomerate made up of 11 electric power cooperatives throughout Mississippi.

As of Wednesday afternoon, all that

remained to be done at the site was the installation of some wiring. "We're waiting on South Mississippi Electric to do additional testing, and then we will be ready," said O'Bryan.

Although the official commissioning ceremony is not until late March, O'Bryan said the solar panels will be fully energized and feeding power into the grid within the next few weeks.

SME is building four other similar solar facilities in Mississippi. One is a joint venture between SME and the Coahoma Electric Power Association in Clarksdale, and the other three are in the southern part of the state.

Each solar installation will have a generating capacity of 100 kilowatts, approximately enough to power 14 average homes for one

year. Each of the five facilities houses 360 individual panels.

The land on which the Greenwood facility is being built is being leased from Delta Electric by SME for the solar pilot program.

The infrastructure is being constructed by Atlanta-based Hannah Solar.

"We have surveyed our customers in years past, and our members have told us that they want solar power," said O'Bryan.

For SME, the pilot programs are an intermediate step towards the construction of a much larger plan in Lamar County, to be built in partnership with Origis Energy USA.

"The purpose of this construction is to allow us to study the output from the facility and to

understand the economics of the solar energy system," said O'Bryan.

The Lamar County site will be constructed and run by Origis. SME has agreed to purchase all of the electricity generated at the site, enough to meet the power demands of 10,000 homes.

SME's portfolio, and therefore Delta Electric's, includes natural gas, coal, nuclear, hydropower and solar. Greenwood-based Delta Electric provides power to customers in 13 counties.

"Our cooperatives are committed to the betterment of our communities and environment," said O'Bryan.

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