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MAR 15

SOLAR POWER PROJECTS SPARKING UP THROUGHOUT STATE

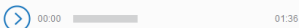
Posted by [Evelina Burnett](#) on Mar 15, 2016 at 7:00 am

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AN AERIAL SHOT OF THE SOLAR FACILITY AT COAST ELECTRIC IN KILN, Coast Electric Power Association

South Mississippi Electric has two new solar-power generation facilities on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, part of its plan to increase the use of the renewable resource. As MPB's Evelina Burnett reports, solar power is becoming more common in Mississippi.



"This is our solar facility here in Hancock County."

Nathan Brown is chief operating officer of South Mississippi Electric. His organization dedicated two small-scale solar power installations on the gulf coast on Monday, including here at Coast Electric Power Association in Kiln.

"It's made up of 378 different panels," he says. "Those panels are 350 watts each, so in peak intensity time the facility is capable of producing 96kw of energy. That would serve, depending on the size of the household, somewhere between 11 and 14 houses."

South Mississippi Electric will open three more small sites over the next few months. It's also partnering on a large solar facility – 520 times the one here - that should open next year.

April Lollar is a spokesperson for Coast Electric, one of the 11 cooperatives that receives its power from South Mississippi Electric.

"Our members have said in surveys that [solar power is] something they're interested in, they want us to pursue," she says. "And since we're a not-for-profit cooperative, we're actually owned by the people we serve, they're members and owners - that's why we don't call them customers. So when they told us that this was something they wanted us to pursue, we took that seriously. It's also the way regulations are heading and we wanted to be proactive and be part of that early on and not wait."

Mississippi Power recently broke ground on a solar facility at the Seabee base in Gulfport and has two more solar projects in the works. Entergy has three solar pilot installations in Mississippi. Two solar facilities in Lowndes County were also approved last year.

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