



## RENEWABLE ENERGY



## Mississippi Co-ops Adding Solar

By Derrill Holly | ECT Staff Writer

Published: April 15th, 2016

The members want renewables, so this G&amp;T is delivering.



Officials of South Mississippi Electric and the Mississippi Public Service Commission at the solar array dedication. (Photo By SME)

"South Mississippi Electric is in the solar power generation business," Jim Compton, general manager and CEO, declared during the recent dedication ceremony for a solar array.

The small-scale project outside the headquarters of [Delta Electric Power Association](#) in Greenwood is one of four facilities—each less than 100 kilowatts—recently commissioned by the Hattiesburg-based G&T.

Other units are located next to the headquarters of [Coahoma Electric](#) in Lyon, [Coast EPA](#) in Kiln, and Lucedale-based [Singing River Electric Cooperative](#).

While the projects are not big, their locations reflect the G&T's commitment to respond directly to members' interest in the technology. The distribution co-ops each provided about half an acre of land for the 378 panel arrays, and the G&T invested about \$1 million to cover equipment and installation costs.

"Our members have expressed a strong desire for renewable energy to be a larger part of our generation mix," said Compton. "We have taken steps toward accomplishing that goal, but we are not finished."

A fifth site is planned outside of the headquarters of [Southern Pine Electric](#) in Taylorsville, and [South Mississippi Electric](#) is considering other possible locations.

But utility-scale solar is also part of the G&T's renewable energy portfolio strategy. A power purchase agreement with Origin Energy USA commits SME to purchase the full output from a 52-megawatt array planned for Mississippi's Lamar County.

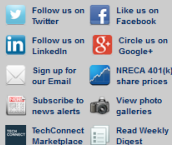
"Our cooperatives are committed to the betterment of our ratepayers, their communities and their environment," said Compton. "This is just the first of many positive steps we expect in 2016."

The G&T continues to work with its member distribution co-ops and the [National Renewables Cooperative Organization](#) on additional options to expand its renewable portfolio. Business and community leaders were on hand at each of the dedication ceremonies reflecting growing interest in the technology.

"Solar power will provide an environmentally friendly source of electricity," said Bob Occhi, Coast EPA's president and CEO, adding that such projects are good for co-op-served communities. "One of our principles is concern for the community, and that benefits everyone."

Tags: [G&T](#), [Renewable Energy](#), [Solar Energy](#)

## ECT.coop Quick Links



## ADVERTISEMENTS



Elster is now a part of Honeywell

Learn how our combined solutions can benefit you.

