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# Singing River Electric, Coast Electric add solar power production facilities

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By Al Showers, Reporter [CONNECT](#)



The cut of a blue ribbon began a new era of power for Coast Electric. (Photo source: WLOX)



in size and contain 360 panels. (Photo source: WLOX)

HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) - Singing River Electric and Coast Electric are now greener. Monday morning, the two companies each cut ribbons on new solar power generation facilities.

South Mississippi Electric paid \$250,000 to build each of the two solar sites, which are one half acre in size and contain 360 panels.

The move gives both power companies another source of energy. Officials say it's not yet known if solar energy is cheaper than coal. However, South Mississippi Electric is hoping to answer that question with the new facilities.

The solar powered station opened on the grounds of the Coast Electric headquarters building on Highway 603 in the Kiln.

The cut of a blue ribbon began a new era of power for Coast Electric.

It's one of five solar clusters that have been or will be built in Mississippi as part of a demonstration project.

"On a sunny day, it's capable of creating enough power to power approximately 14 homes," said Louis Lee, Coast Electric Vice President of Special Projects.

But, there are those cloudy days when less than half of those 14 homes can be solar powered.

"Yesterday was Sunday, and we had a very sunny day, and it produced the maximum amount of power, which is 96-kilowatts," Occhi said. "You can tell the days it rained Friday. We had rain, and it only produced 10-kilowatts."

South Mississippi Electric is the company that generates power for Coast Electric. It has big plans to add solar technology to the power grid.

"South Mississippi plans on building a 52-megawatt, which is 50 times bigger than this facility in Lamar County, close to Hattiesburg," said Occhi.

He said that should come online in late 2017, opening the doors to solar power for Coast Electric customers.

"The members will be able to purchase or lease a percentage of these panels and the amount of power generated will be deducted from their power bill," explained Occhi.

"People who can't necessarily spend tens of thousands of dollars to put solar panels on their homes or may have a shady lot or are renters will still have the potential to participate in renewable and solar energy," said April Lollar, Coast Electric Media Services Executive.

Coast Electric leaders say the solar milestone moves the company a step closer to becoming a more environmentally friendly business.

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