

Solar project powering 40 percent of Dane County facilities

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In its first nine months of operation, the Dane County Regional Airport's latest solar project has produced enough electricity to power 1,200 Wisconsin homes for a year.

County officials and Madison Gas and Electric Chairman, President and CEO Jeff Keebler highlighted the solar partnership yesterday. After going online in December 2020, the array now provides electricity for about 40 percent of county facilities, a release shows. It's the third solar installation at the airport.

The county has set a goal of reaching 100 percent renewable electricity at county-owned facilities by 2024. Dane County currently gets about 45 percent of its electricity from renewable sources.

"Not only is the project reducing county operating costs, but it also created local job opportunities during the pandemic," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "Clean energy efforts like this one benefit our environment, the local economy, and Dane County taxpayers."

MGE has also set a renewable energy goal, aiming for net-zero carbon electricity for all of its customers by 2050. The company says it's on track to reach 65 percent carbon reductions by 2030.

"Travelers and drivers along Highway 51 will see this large array and know our community is committed to growing clean energy," Keebler said.

The project has about 31,000 solar panels that track the sun covering 58 acres of county-owned land north of the airport. Under the partnership agreement, the county leases the land to MGE, which then sells electricity generated there to the county. The release shows the county projects energy savings of about \$137,000 through its purchase agreement with MGE over the project's first year of operation.

See more on the project: <https://www.msairport.com/about/ecomentality/energy>