

County Executive Parisi, Alliant Energy & SunVest Solar: Kick off construction of solar farm to make Dane County 100% renewable

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi joined Alliant Energy and SunVest Solar executives to kick off the construction of a 90-acre solar project on county-owned land in the Town of Cottage Grove. Known as the Yahara Solar Project, construction of this project will achieve Dane County's goal of using 100% renewable electricity at all county facilities.

"Our clean energy partnership with Alliant Energy and SunVest Solar results in Dane County achieving our goal of powering our buildings with 100% renewable electricity," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "I'm proud that our county is the first in the state and just a handful in the nation to achieve this renewable energy accomplishment that combats climate change and creates local clean energy jobs."

Once the solar project begins operation early next year, the 17-megawatt (MW) project site will be home to over 33,000 solar panels and produce more than 31,000 MW-hours of renewable electricity per year — enough to power 3,000 Dane County homes. The renewable electricity generated from this new project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an amount equivalent to the emissions produced by over 3,800 cars or the burning of 20 million pounds of coal per year.

"Alliant Energy is proud to assist Dane County in achieving its clean energy goals through the Yahara Solar Project," said JP Brummond, Vice President of Customer and Community Engagement for Alliant Energy. "We're constantly looking for new ways to serve our customers and build stronger communities. This unique

partnership extends Dane County's position as a renewable energy leader and showcases Alliant Energy's creative solutions for renewable energy development."

Alliant Energy selected SunVest Solar headquartered in Pewaukee, Wisconsin to build, operate, and initially own the project. SunVest Solar has been the #1 solar developer in Wisconsin since 2015 and is ranked in the top 10 solar developers nationwide by Solar Power World magazine.

"SunVest Solar applauds the commitment Dane County has made to renewable energy and shares in its vision for an energy-independent future," said Kirk Kindred, President of SunVest Solar, LLC. "The Yahara Solar Project is SunVest's largest solar project in Wisconsin to date. We look forward to working with Dane County and Alliant Energy as the project comes to life."

The Yahara Solar Project is Dane County government's largest renewable energy project, nearly double the size of the solar installation at the Dane County Regional Airport—a 9-MW project that began operation in December 2020.

Alliant Energy will deliver the power generated to its customers, and Dane County in return for leasing the land will receive the renewable energy credits (RECs). Under an innovative deal structure, the County continues to own the land, and Alliant Energy leases the land, with payment made in RECs. This allows the County to reach its renewable energy goals for decades to come without any increase in energy costs. The RECs will offset the County's greenhouse gas emissions without any increase in energy costs helping the County to achieve its renewable energy goals under the adopted Climate Action Plan.

The solar project will create approximately 70 jobs during peak construction. According to the National Solar Jobs Census, there were nearly 3,000 people employed in the solar industry in Wisconsin in 2020.

Converting over 90 acres of agricultural land previously used for growing corn and soybeans to solar energy production and additional acreage on the site to prairie grass plantings will produce additional environmental benefits. Transforming the land to energy production will cut water runoff volume by about 325,000 cubic feet or roughly 3.5 Olympic-size swimming pools, reducing phosphorus runoff to area waterways by 370 pounds annually. Not tilling the land will boost habitat for dwindling pollinator populations and sequester 72 tons of soil carbon or the equivalent emissions of over 8,000 gallons of gasoline burned annually.

Dane County gets more power from solar than any other county in the state. Dane County generates power at 16 county-owned facilities, including the Dane County Regional Airport Solar Project and soon to be constructed Yahara Solar Project. An interactive “Clean Energy” map showcasing all of Dane County’s existing projects can be accessed [here](#).