

Dane County Exec. Parisi: Announces final plans for solar project to make Dane County government 100% renewable

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Dane County and Alliant Energy to Partner on Construction this Spring of 90-Acre Solar Facility in Town of Cottage Grove

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

"Partnering with Alliant Energy on our largest solar project yet results in Dane County achieving our goal of 100% renewable electricity," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "This major accomplishment benefits both the environment and our economy, creating local clean energy jobs and helping combat climate change."

This 17-megawatt (MW) solar field will include over 33,000 solar panels and produce more than 31,000 MWh of renewable electricity per year. That's enough to power 3,600 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 4,700 vehicles or the burning of 24 million pounds of coal per year.

"On behalf of our customers and the community, we're pleased to partner with

Dane County on this important solar project,” said JP Brummond, VP of Customer & Community Engagement at Alliant Energy. “We’re proud to be changing the way we create energy, while ensuring continued availability to meet customer demand. Guided by our value of acting for tomorrow, this partnership is a smart investment. It creates jobs, serves as a local economic catalyst and its good for the overall health of our environment.”

This solar project will be nearly double the size of the solar installation at the Dane County Regional Airport—a 9 MW project that began operation in December 2020. Pending County Board approval, the county will lease the property to Alliant Energy. Once the project is complete, Alliant Energy will deliver the power generated from the Yahara Solar Project to its customers. Dane County will receive the renewable energy credits (RECs) from the facility, which will offset the county’s greenhouse gas and carbon dioxide emissions and help achieve its goals under the Climate Action Plan.

In addition to the environmental benefits, systems also create local jobs. According to the National Solar Jobs Census, there were nearly 3,000 people employed in the solar industry in Wisconsin in 2020. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the economy, Dane County is hopeful large-scale solar projects like the ones at Dane County Regional Airport and Town of Cottage Grove will create much needed jobs in the community and help stimulate the local economy.

Dane County owns more solar than any other county in the state, generating power at 16 county-owned facilities. An interactive “Clean Energy” map showcasing all of Dane County’s existing projects is accessible from the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change’s website at <https://daneclimateaction.org/>.

A resolution to approve the lease to Alliant Energy for the development of this solar installation will be introduced to the Dane County Board at tonight’s meeting. It is expected to be approved in the coming weeks.