

November 8, 2019

Renewable Energy

Delaware Electric Cooperative to Expand Solar Farm

Construction is underway to expand **Delaware Electric Cooperative's Bruce A. Henry Solar Farm** in **Sussex County**.

Earlier this year, DEC signed an agreement with **Constellation**, a leading retail energy provider, to nearly **double the size** of the **23-acre solar facility** near **Georgetown**.



The new phase of the solar farm is under construction.

Constellation, an **Exelon** company, is currently building a **17-acre, 4.2-megawatt** addition to the solar farm. DEC will purchase the clean energy produced at the site from the company for a stable, competitive price for the next **25 years**.

According to DEC President and CEO **Bill Andrew**, "Our goal is to provide our members with the **cleanest and most affordable power**. This project will allow us to **increase our portfolio of renewable energy sources** without **raising electric rates**. It's good for members and good for the environment."

than **400 homes**. The combined **40 acres of solar panels** located at the site are expected to produce enough energy to power nearly **1,000 homes**.

The project has created approximately **40 temporary jobs**. The expanded array is expected to produce an estimated **5.1 million kilowatt-hours** of electricity in the first year.

"By teaming with the Delaware Electric Cooperative to introduce additional renewable supply to its members, we're bringing another **clean energy solution** to municipal **cooperative customers** across the U.S.," said **Brendon Quinlivan**, executive director, Distributed Energy Origination for Constellation. "We're also helping to fulfill our commitment to develop **five megawatts** of solar generation in the State of Delaware as a result of the Exelon-Pepco Holdings merger in 2016."



The first phase of the Bruce A. Henry Solar Farm became operational in 2013.

The Bruce A. Henry Solar Farm, named for a longtime **DEC board member**, became operational in **2013** and houses **16,000 solar panels**. The expanded portion of the facility is expected to begin producing power for co-op members by the end of the year, pending any weather-related delays.

-Report by Jeremy Tucker, Delaware Electric Cooperative communications manager.

Co-op News

Mecklenburg Electric Awarded \$3.8 Million for Broadband Expansion

A **public-private partnership** will enable **Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative** to expand its **broadband service** across **Brunswick County**.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's **ReConnect program** will provide MEC with a **\$3.8 million loan**, officials announced **Nov. 4**.



John C. Lee Jr., president and CEO of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, speaks at the award announcement with U.S. Rep. Denver Riggleman (l) and "DJ" LaVoy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The money will help MEC's wholly owned **Empower Broadband** subsidiary to serve **1,254 households**, and the initiative will hook up four **educational facilities** and **two volunteer fire departments**.

"Our cooperative is **very proud** of the significant role we have played in **improving the quality of life** for those living here, and in 2019, we continue to build upon that legacy by forming **Empower Broadband to bring resilient, best-in-technology internet service** to the citizens of **Southside Virginia**," John C. Lee Jr., MEC president and CEO, said at a ceremony announcing the award.

Donald "DJ" LaVoy, USDA deputy undersecretary of rural development, was present at the event, held at the **Triplet Volunteer Fire Department in Lawrenceville**, part of Mecklenburg Electric's service territory.

and this mission cannot be achieved without addressing the digital divide our rural communities face due to a lack of high-speed broadband internet connection," DJ told a group of federal, state and local dignitaries, and community leaders.

U.S. Rep. Denver Riggleman of the **5th District**, a member of the **Congressional Rural Broadband Caucus**, said the award is an example of ways in which the public and private sectors can work together to fill unmet needs.

"Our **rural communities** need access to **broadband** to keep up with the demands of the **modern economy**. Broadband will help communities close the digital divide, which is critical to creating economic opportunity, job creation, access to health care and education in rural America," he said.

John Lee said Empower Broadband plans to build a hub that will enable it to provide more high-speed internet service to **Brunswick County**.

He noted that, under terms of a recent agreement, Empower will provide high-speed internet to a **new call center** that will bring **153 jobs to Brunswick County**.

"**Without access to fiber**, that call center would likely have landed elsewhere," John said. "When no one else would bring **dependable high-speed internet service to our region**, despite the rapidly rising importance of access, we have answered our membership's call."

-Report by Steven Johnson, VMD Association Director of Member & Public Relations.



(l-r) John C. Lee Jr., president and CEO of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative; U.S. Rep. Denver Riggleman; Barbara Jarrett-Harris, chairwoman of the Brunswick County Board of Supervisors; and "DJ" LaVoy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Commitment to Community

NOVEC HELPS Holds Thanksgiving Food Drive

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative's nonprofit volunteer organization, **NOVEC HELPS**, is holding a **Thanksgiving food drive** from **Nov. 1 to Nov. 14**. NOVEC HELPS is asking area residents to drop off nonperishable food at two NOVEC offices, open from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday: 10323 Lomond Drive, Manassas, Virginia 20109 and 14500 Minnieville Road, Woodbridge, Virginia 22193.

NOVEC HELPS will donate the food to two area food drives: **Northern Virginia Family Service's Operation Turkey** drive, and the joint **Action in Community Through Service (ACTS)** and **Prince William County Community Foundation's Operation Food for the Holidays** drive. The organizations will distribute the food to qualified low-income residents in **Prince William County**.

Suggested food items include bread and muffin mixes, instant mashed potatoes, pasta, rice, boxed desserts, sugar, flour, evaporated milk, prepared piecrusts, canned meats, vegetables, cranberry sauce, apple sauce, pie filling, and gravy.

“We want everyone to experience a joyful holiday by having plenty to eat on Thanksgiving,” said **Christine Kelly**, NOVEC HELPS chairperson.

-Report by Priscilla Knight, NOVEC senior communications specialist.

Help Us Keep You Informed!

If you have story ideas, news or information of interest and benefit to other members of the electric cooperative community in our three-state area, please contact:

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NOVEC's Ann Phares displays some of the Thanksgiving food NOVEC HELPS has collected. (NOVEC photo.)

Co-op People

Casey Logan Featured on Broadband Panel

The pros and cons of broadband expansion were the order of the day at a recent forum in **Alexandria, Virginia**, and **Casey Logan** of **Prince George Electric Cooperative** was there to tell his co-op's story.



PGEC President & CEO Casey Logan.

Casey, **president and CEO of PGEC**, was a **panelist** at the **Broadband Communities High Speed Broadband: Driving America's Growth Conference and Expo** on **Oct. 31**.

The conference was designed to explore key elements in the haves-versus-have-nots problem.

Casey said **managing expectations** is a major issue with broadband expansion. It's important, he noted, to be honest with members about how long it will take them to get connected to the internet.

Digital literacy remains a problem among older members, he noted. “We have to make them aware of how **valuable broadband** is to their **grandchildren**.”

For more on the conference, [check out NRECA's coverage](#).

-Report by Steven Johnson, VMD Association Director of Member & Public Relations.

Correction

In the article about a **NOVEC HELPS community service project** in the Oct. 23, 2019 issue of Connections, we **misidentified the individual** shown working with painter's tape in one of the photos. The individual in the photo should have been identified as **Jessica Torres Cervetto**. We apologize for the error.