

People tour the facility during Tuesday's ribbon cutting. (Image: Jury Jerome/Glenwood Post Independent)

Community owned solar array goes live in Rifle

By [Scot Kersgaard](#) | 06.15.11 | 11:01 am

Tuesday, the nation's largest community owned solar energy facility opened in Rifle.

[The Glenwood Post Independent reports](#) that the array's 3,575 solar energy panels are expected to produce more than 1,500 megawatt-hours of clean, renewable electricity each year for as many as [350 Holy Cross Energy customers](#) who buy in to the project.

Former Governor Bill Ritter, now head of Colorado State University's [Center for the New Energy Economy](#) gave the opening remarks at the ceremony, attended by all manner of local politicians.

[Senator Mark Udall](#) released the following statement following the grand opening celebration of the Clean Energy Collective community solar array farm:

“This community solar array farm represents the future of renewable energy for Coloradans. It helps to make clean energy accessible to every American by breaking down barriers, such as high costs, and it will help ensure our country's path to energy independence. I applaud the Clean Energy Collective for their achievement and I pledge to continue fighting for the SUN Act.”

In May, Udall re-introduced the Solar Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Act, which would make “solar farms” eligible for a 30-percent tax credit that is currently only available to those who install solar panels on their homes but excludes neighborhood groups and rural co-ops that want to install community solar projects. An idea from his discussions with community and business leaders across the state, the bill would encourage neighbors to pool resources to erect group solar panels in sunny areas near their homes, similar to the Clean Energy Collective community “solar farm.”

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