

- ECT.coop - <http://www.ect.coop> -

New Solar Garden in Colorado

By Victoria A. Rocha *Published: June 24, 2011 @ 5:00 am* In Renewable Energy

A Colorado co-op is collaborating with a local renewable energy developer in what's being billed as the nation's largest community-owned solar array, which recently opened on public land near a rural airport.



[1]

Local, state and co-op officials, joined solar energy enthusiasts for a ribbon-cutting of a solar facility in Colorado. (Photo By: Clean Energy Collective)

Holy Cross Energy, Glenwood Springs, is buying the output of the five-acre, 858-kilowatt Garfield County Airport Solar Array, which opened this month near Rifle. At 3,575 panels, it's the largest community-owned solar garden of its kind, according to the Clean Energy Collective, a local group that's teaming with the co-op on the facility.

Former Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter praised [Holy Cross Energy](#) ^[2] for its green energy efforts during the June 14 ribbon-cutting, attended by public and private officials. "The CEC has it right," Ritter added. "This is a way for people to have affordable power and to be able to participate and feel good about how they're generating their energy."

The Garfield facility not only boosts Holy Cross Energy's solar holdings to nearly 2.9 megawatts, it's also the co-op's second major partnership with CEC. Last August,

[the co-op and CEC commissioned the 78-kilowatt Mid-Valley Solar Array](#), ^[3] which sold out the first week it opened.

Like the Mid-Valley facility, only co-op consumer-members can buy and own solar panels and then get a monetary credit on their monthly electric bills. Members can buy in at \$3.15 per watt, or \$725 per 230-watt panel, and, with CEC's help, can later sell, transfer or donate their panels to other co-op members at a fair market value.

While members become fractional owners of the arrays, CEC is responsible for all maintenance and operational costs for 50 years and processes rebates and tax credits.

"The beauty of the community-owned model," said Stephen Casey, the co-op's member services manager, is that it "opens accessibility of renewable energy generation ownership to everyone. It's affordable, offers perpetual maintenance, and it's not on your property."

Should demand and interest continue, and if land negotiations go smoothly, there could be more purchasing opportunities for eco-friendly consumer-members in the future. CEC is working on several projects, including expanding the array to 1.6 megawatts, and developing up to two 1 MW solar arrays near El Jebel and Wolcott, Colo.

The co-op "has a contract with CEC to buy the output of up to 3.5 MW of renewable energy generation from CEC facilities located within our service territory," said Casey.

Article printed from ECT.coop: <http://www.ect.coop>

URL to article: <http://www.ect.coop/power-supply/renewable-energy/new-solar-garden-in-colorado/31007>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: http://www.ect.coop/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Solar-Garden_rs.jpg
[2] Holy Cross Energy: <http://www.holycross.com>
[3] the co-op and CEC commissioned the 78-kilowatt Mid-Valley Solar Array, :
<http://www.ect.coop/power-supply/renewable-energy/colorados-solar-garden-shines/17680>

Copyright © 2011 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. All rights reserved.