Kentucky residents and businesses help build new solar array

LG&E and KU add more solar generation thanks to customers across the state

(SIMPSONVILLE, Ky.) – Just ahead of the sunny summer season, LG&E and KU, together with their customers, are expanding renewable energy generation in Kentucky by adding more locally-grown solar energy to the grid.

The company recently completed construction of the second 500-kilowatt section at its Solar Share facility in Simpsonville. With the addition of the new 1,300 panel array, customers participating in the program are now helping produce a total of one megawatt of local solar energy here in the Bluegrass state – with more room to grow.

“We created the Solar Share program because our customers expressed an interest in supporting local renewables and their increasing participation shows not only is the interest still there, but it’s on the rise,” said Eileen Saunders, LG&E and KU vice president-Customer Services. “Kentucky Habitat for Humanity and Centre College are among the nearly 700 customers choosing to subscribe to the second section. We’re thrilled to continue building out the facility for them and with the pace at which this is happening.”

The subscription-based Solar Share Program is a cost-effective option available to the utilities’ residential, business and industrial customers who want to support solar energy for as little as 20 cents per day.

When energy is produced by the facility, customers earn credits on their monthly bills based on their subscription level. Participating customers can also choose to select a gifting option that enables program subscribers to transfer monthly Solar Share bill credits to another recipient. Customers get the benefits from solar energy without the up-front cost and long-term maintenance that come when installing a private solar system.

Centre College is the first educational institution subscribing to the program and, as part of a unique partnership announced in December, Kentucky Habitat for Humanity (KYHF) is using the gifting option to benefit some of the organization’s clients. Habitat is transferring credits from 185 shares of the program to 10 families, selected collaboratively by KYHFH and Habitat affiliates across the state, with a goal to help offset as much as 30% of the families’ monthly energy usage.

“The creative way we’re using this program is enabling us to further empower low-income families and ensure they have a decent and affordable place to call home,” said KYHFH Executive Director Mary Shearer. “We’re proud to be able to assist our clients while also demonstrating our commitment to the environment and community by supporting this renewable energy.”

A total of eight 500-kilowatt Solar Share sections are planned for the Simpsonville facility, for a total of four megawatts. Construction of each section is completed as each becomes fully subscribed. The utility is currently accepting enrollments for the third section, which is now more than 60% subscribed.

Solar site enhancements

LG&E and KU’s Solar Share property is one of several company properties that will be home to future pollinator habitats, rich with native plants that create an environment that attracts and supports pollinators such as native bees, honey bees and monarch butterflies, which have experienced population declines over the last decade. Other benefits of pollinator habitats include beautifying the landscape, supporting grassland birds, reducing water runoff and soil erosion, reduced maintenance costs and educational opportunities.

Other pollinator habitats are being installed at the company’s Cane Run and retired Tyrone station properties and more than 100 acres of pollinator habitat and native grasslands are being established at E.W. Brown Generating Station in Mercer County. In addition, in partnership with Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, a flock of 25 Shetland sheep has been added at Brown’s 10-megawatt universal solar site. The flock, which is expected to multiply three-fold, will eventually help manage vegetation across the entire 50-acre solar property at Brown, which will reduce maintenance costs.

Customers interested in subscribing to the Solar Share program or learning more about LG&E and KU’s variety of renewable energy programs and initiatives can visit the company website at lge-ku.com/environment/solar.

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For further information: call the LG&E and KU media hotline at 502–627–4999.

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