

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 13, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- In a move demonstrating Ameren Missouri's continued commitment to renewable and diverse sources of energy, the company is announcing today a multi-million-dollar project to build the state's largest investor-owned solar energy center.

The facility will be located in O'Fallon, MO. Construction is scheduled to begin in April following final design and permitting in late spring. The project is expected to deliver power to Ameren Missouri customers by December 2014.

"We are building the largest investor-owned solar energy center in Missouri history because Ameren Missouri is committed to powering the quality of life for our customers with cleaner energy derived from a diverse mix of energy sources, including renewables," said Warner Baxter, president and CEO of Ameren Missouri.

The O'Fallon Renewable Energy Center will be capable of generating 5.7 MW, enough electricity to power 650 average-size homes in the St. Louis area. The facility will feature more than 19,000 solar panels and will be built adjacent to Ameren Missouri's Belleau substation in St. Charles County on approximately 19 acres already owned by the utility.

Baxter said the project is expected to generate 50 to 70 construction jobs.

Ameren Missouri's commitment to renewable energy is not new. It goes back more than a century. In 1913, the company's first hydroelectric energy center opened. In 2012, the company opened the Maryland Heights Renewable Energy Center, one of the largest plants in the nation turning "trash into energy." In addition, the utility has supported 1,800 residential and commercial solar installations with rebates and other incentives over the last three years.

Written by Australian Business

"We are committed to renewable energy as one solution to meeting our customers' long-term energy needs," Baxter said.

In 2010, Ameren installed about 100 kilowatts of solar PV technologies on the roof of its St. Louis headquarters. This was done primarily to acquire performance data, and helped to educate customers who were considering solar installations.

"Thanks to this research, we were able to verify the effectiveness of the technological and operational aspects of a solar project which helped to make this new project possible," said Bill Barbieri, director of renewable strategy policy and generation for Ameren Missouri. "The O'Fallon solar farm will allow us to expand our expertise with a utility-scale facility."

"We are excited that Ameren Missouri has decided to locate its solar energy center in our community," O'Fallon Mayor Bill Hennessy said. "O'Fallon is proud of its reputation as a green community. The O'Fallon Renewable Energy Center will be an excellent complement to our city's environmental focus and will be a welcome boost to our economy with the construction jobs it will create."

Ameren Missouri has been providing electric and gas service for more than a century, and our electric rates are among the lowest in the nation. We serve 1.2 million electric and 127,000 natural gas customers in central and eastern Missouri. Our mission is to meet their energy needs in a safe, reliable, efficient and environmentally responsible manner. Our service area covers 63 counties and more than 500 towns, including the greater St. Louis area. For more information, visit AmerenMissouri.com.

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