

MPUA PUBLIC OUTREACH RESOURCES - January 2016 (or late December 2015)

OPINION/EDITORIAL about RENEWABLE ENERGY

Member Electric Utilities: *The draft 'op-ed' piece below will be especially applicable to MoPEP cities, but can also be adapted to apply to other MJMEUC participants. You may wish to consider adapting it as the basis for a guest opinion/editorial in your local paper, a letter to the editor, or a local media interview. If you have other needs, thoughts, or requests for related media materials, or would like to have this information adapted into another format by MPUA, please contact MPUA's Community Outreach Coordinator Kerry Cordray.*

HAPPY RENEWABLE YEAR - (OPINION-EDITORIAL about Renewable Energy)

For an organization like **[CITY/UTILITY]**, just as it does for an individual person, reflection on the year past and anticipation of a New Year to come can bring a sense of accomplishment along with careful optimism for the future. This point of view is especially relevant when it comes to the promise of renewable energy in Missouri.

In the past year, energy and environmental mandates have been especially in the thoughts of many who oversee city utilities, as the federal "Clean Power Plan" called for state plans to reduce carbon emissions because of climate change concerns. Likely features of most preliminary state plans, due to be submitted by states later in 2016, could be an emphasis on energy efficiency programs and a shift to greater use of renewable energy sources for power production.

For years, Missouri's municipal electric utilities have been committed to renewable energy and laying the groundwork for its growth. **[CITY'S]** cooperation with cities in the Missouri Public Utility Alliance (MPUA) means that we have helped to pioneer the early development of affordable utility scale renewable energy and other new energy technologies in Missouri, reducing CO2 emissions and helping the environment in other ways.

In the past few years, the teamwork among Missouri cities has been especially notable as they have led the way in developing Missouri's solar power resources. For example, when the Butler Solar Energy Farm began generating power in early 2014, it was the largest solar power plant in the state up to that date, and the first utility scale solar generating project to begin solar generation in Missouri. In 2015, other cities in the Alliance have followed suit, with the completion and 'powering up' of similar scale solar energy farms in Macon and Trenton, and the breaking of ground for another in Marshall.

In the last decade, cities and facilities in the Alliance also shared national recognition for the development of cogeneration plants in Macon and Laddonia, plants that make more efficient use of resources by generating both electricity and steam to power local ethanol plants.

Reduced methane emissions are also a benefit of plants in Lamar and near Hartville that generate electricity using the gas from landfills that would otherwise be wasted

In wind energy, when the Loess Hills Wind Farm near Rockport began operation in 2008 it drew international attention, proclaimed “the “first 100% wind-powered town in America” because of the farm’s design to harvest more wind power than the town used. Most recently, MPUA’s signing of a power purchase contract to buy power from a planned wind farm in northern Kansas will soon bring at least four times more wind-produced energy into the mix of sources that provide power to light **[CITY]** homes and businesses.

The development of these renewable power sources reflects the way they have grown more cost effective than in years past. But they are still not yet able to generate the constant and sustained baseload power that **[CITY]** and other partner cities need. For decades to come, power plants fueled by coal and natural gas will remain an important foundation of a diverse power portfolio. The newest of these fossil-fueled power sources are becoming cleaner and contributing less to environmental concerns. For example, one newer coal-fired facility in Illinois that provides some power to cities in the MPUA partnership features emissions control equipment that makes it among the cleanest coal-fired plants in the nation.

[CITY UTILITY NAME] and other Missouri municipal utilities are non-profit, community-owned and locally-controlled utilities that serve the public interest. As we all respond to the challenges of the future, citizens can be assured that **[CITY UTILITY NAME]** is driven by the values of community service, and committed to the priorities and concerns of its citizen/owners.

Adding solar, wind and other alternative energy sources to fossil fuel energy production that is becoming increasingly clean provides diversity to our power supplies, which in turn makes for a robust, resilient energy system. A system that is both dependable and affordable at the same time it becomes more environmentally responsible is a goal to reach for in 2016 and years to come.