

Flying High With Solar Power

A 75-acre solar farm on the grounds of the Indianapolis International Airport might not look too impressive from the air, but it is the largest airport-based facility of its kind in the country. With a pending expansion, it could become the biggest in the world.

The IND Solar Farm was commissioned in October 2013. Here are some quick facts:

- Phase I of the farm includes 44,128 solar panels
- It produces 12.5 megawatts of energy annually, which is enough to power about 1,800 average-sized homes in Marion County
- The total amount of carbon dioxide avoided is equal to 3,165 barrels of oil consumed

The power from the solar farm heads to the Indianapolis Power & Light (IPL) grid for the 15 years of the public-private partnership agreement, according to Alexa Amatulli, marketing and project coordinator for project partner Telamon Corporation.

“The power produced feeds into the IPL grid and it’s distributed out to local homes in Marion County,” she explains. “The airport could even indirectly use some of the power that’s created.”

The IND Solar Farm partnership includes the Indianapolis Airport Authority, the city of Indianapolis, General Energy Solutions USA, Telamon Corporation, Johnson Melloh Solutions, CENERGY Power and IPL.

Telamon and Johnson Melloh developed the project, and General Energy Solutions USA, a Taiwanese-based company, purchased the solar farm from the two developers. That company runs the day-to-day operations.



The 75-acre solar farm on the grounds of the Indianapolis International Airport is the largest airport-based solar farm in the country.

Phase I of the privately-funded farm cost \$35-40 million, according to Amatulli.

During the construction of Phase I, 125 temporary jobs were created, Amatulli notes. If Phase II is approved in the coming months, construction will start in the summer and be completed “about four to five months from then ... we just want to get Phase II approved and then think about the possibility of expanding. The airport has a lot of free land, so that’s definitely a possibility.”

The Indianapolis project is spurring solar interest in other areas of the state as well.

“There was an article released in Fort Wayne about potentially looking at it in their

airport, and in Hamilton County, there was an *IBJ* (*Indianapolis Business Journal*) article that came out about how Hamilton County is actually considering putting solar on all public buildings, courthouses, jails, etc.,” she indicates.

“A lot of people don’t associate solar with Indiana, but this project at the airport shows that it works everywhere – not just in California and Arizona. I absolutely think a lot of people are taking an interest and seeing how they can implement it into their properties.”

Amatulli also mentions that Telamon will be placing an educational kiosk in the airport terminal for visitors to learn more about the solar farm.



The IND Solar Farm produces 12.5 megawatts of energy annually, or enough to power 1,800 average-sized homes in Marion County.

Senator Continuing the Nuclear Conversation

The Scout motto is “Be Prepared.” It’s what Indiana should do as a state in regard to future energy needs, says Sen. Jim Merritt (R-Indianapolis), chairman of the Senate Utilities Committee.

Merritt suggests the best way to do that is to consider all possibilities for Indiana’s energy landscape, including nuclear power. The ingredients for needing a nuclear plant in the future are utilities getting on board, and the Indiana economy requiring a large base load of power, he contends.

“One of my assignments as chairman (of the utilities committee) is to inform the world that nuclear is much safer,” he shares. “If we don’t have a new steel plant or something that has a large base load, there’s no reason to go – other than the war on coal.”

Merritt submitted Senate Bill 302 in the recent legislative session that would have provided financial incentives for utilities to build nuclear power plants or small modular nuclear reactors (which are housed underground). He withdrew the bill as no large utilities showed interest.

“I want it fresh in people’s minds. If it gets stale, it gets away,” he asserts.

It comes back to having enough clean energy resources for Indiana’s demand, given the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s proclivity for pushing federal air standards that come down hard on coal.

“With the federal government having its position against coal, our choices for reliable clean energy power are more remote. There’s just not really a whole lot of reliability with the other choices. That’s not to say wind and solar and bio aren’t other possibilities, but they could



As chairman of the Senate Utilities Committee, Sen. Jim Merritt (R-Indianapolis) works to keep the conversation going at the Statehouse about the potential of nuclear power in Indiana.

not power a base load,” Merritt contends.

While Merritt supports coal power, he understands the reality of the situation and the need to find an alternative.

“I’ll file this bill until my day is finished as the chairman of the utilities committee . . . nuclear power will continue to be safer and continue to be easier, if you will, with the smaller modular plants, and our economy will continue to grow and that base load will appear,” Merritt concludes. “We need something other than coal to power Indiana.”

RESOURCE: Senator Jim Merritt at www.in.gov/legislative



telamon
simplifying business



JOHNSON MELLOH
SOLUTIONS



simply brilliant.

developers of the IND Solar Farm.

innovative solar & energy efficiency solutions.

www.indsolarfarm.com