

April 21, 2020



FROM THE DESK OF  
COMMISSIONER  
BRENT BAILEY  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE



*The Central District is pleased to bring you the latest information concerning utility rates, project developments, Public Service Commission actions and other news you can use. I hope you will find this information to be a useful resource to learn about the Public Service Commission, consumer issues and the continuous work we are doing for the citizens in the Central District and across the state of Mississippi. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.*

*Brent Bailey*

## SOLAR TAKES ANOTHER STEP FORWARD IN MISSISSIPPI

With approximately 2.2 million installations across the U.S., solar is becoming a cost-competitive, widely-accepted alternative energy resource. Solar generates emission-free energy and easily integrates into the existing grid. Solar panels generate energy for 30 years or more and help utilities diversify their energy resource portfolios and help business and residential customers have greater choice in the energy they consume. Learn more at The Solar Foundation's [Mississippi Solar Factsheet](#).

At the Mississippi Public Service Commission's (MPSC) April 14, 2020 [Docket Meeting](#), the Commission [unanimously approved](#) the Joint Petition filed by Entergy Mississippi, LLC and Sunflower County Solar Project, LLC (SCSP) for SCSP to construct and start-up and for [Entergy Mississippi](#) to acquire, own, and operate the 100 Megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic facility near Ruleville in Sunflower County. The \$136 million solar farm will consist of nearly 350,000 single-axis tracking solar panels placed across nearly 1,000 acres and will generate enough energy to power 16,000 homes.

The SCSP project will add to the [242.32 MW of solar capacity](#) already installed across the state. Other large solar projects operating include the 50 MW Hattiesburg Solar Farm, the 52 MW MS Solar 2 LLC, the 52 MW MS Solar 3 LLC, and the 73 MW SR Meridian III LLC. There also are a smattering of projects ranging from 1 MW to 5 MW located around the state. Furthermore, in January 2020, the Commission approved construction of the 100 MW Delta's Edge Solar Farm to be built in Carroll County. Other large-scale solar projects proposals may come before the Commission in the coming year or two.





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## Electric Utilities Submit Annual Net Metering Reports

In addition, homes and businesses around the state are installing rooftop solar systems with the purpose of reducing their overall energy costs, putting money back into their pockets and becoming more sustainable. Many of these smaller-scale systems (also known as distributed generation) have been installed since the [Mississippi Renewable Energy Net Metering Rule](#) was adopted by the MPSC on December 3, 2015. The Net Metering Rule establishes the regulatory framework that facilitates a consumer's right to self-supply electricity and right to connect to the grid. The Net Metering Rule also establishes how any excess generation of electricity is valued and compensated when sent to the grid by the distributed generation owner.

Furthermore, each electric utility subject to the rule shall submit a Net Metering Report by April 1 of each calendar year. The report includes information such as the number of net metering customers, the type of technology installed and the amount of interconnected generation capacity. The required information is outlined in the Mississippi Renewable Energy Net Metering Rule.

### Entergy Mississippi, LLC (2016-UN-32)

Entergy Mississippi, LLC (EML) serves approximately [451,000 customers in 45 of Mississippi's 82 counties](#). EML's [Net Metering and Interconnection Report for Calendar Year 2019](#) indicates that twenty-three (23) customers with a total nameplate capacity of 390.81 kW executed solar Net Metering Agreements during 2019. Previously, nineteen (19) customers with a total generating capacity of 184.69 kW executed solar Net Metering Interconnection Agreements in 2018. Twenty-two (22) customers executed solar Net Metering Interconnection Agreements in 2017.



RideSouth Recumbents in Rankin County has a 14.2 kW(ac) solar array and Tesla Powerwall batteries.

At the end of 2019, seventy-five (75) customers have executed Net Metering Interconnection Agreements since EML implemented its Net Metering Program in September 2016. The 75 Net Metering Interconnected customers (0.016% of EML's customer base) have achieved the following: Represent 904.6 kW in distributed generation capacity; Delivered 386,166 kWh to the grid; Collected \$25,606.48 from EML for the energy exported to the grid. The 904.6 kW capacity represents 0.0302% of EML's Total System Peak Demand of 2,994 MW. EML may refuse Net Metering Applications if total Net Metering Interconnection capacity exceeds 3.0% of Total System Peak Demand. EML's Total System Peak Demand increased from 2,916.60 MW in 2018 to 2,994 MW in 2019.

At the end of 2019, EML had ninety-seven (97) total distributed generation facility customers (96 solar and 1 wind). These include distributed generation customers that existed prior to the start of EML's Net Metering Program and the 75 customers that have executed Net Metering Interconnection Agreements since. The 97 total distributed generation customers at the end of 2019 (0.0215% of EML's customer base) represent 974.23 kW of distributed generation capacity and 0.0325% of EML's Total System Peak Demand. To participate in Entergy Mississippi's net metering program, visit [https://www.entergy-mississippi.com/net\\_metering/](https://www.entergy-mississippi.com/net_metering/).





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### Mississippi Power Co. (2016-UN-33)

Mississippi Power Company (MPCo) serves approximately 187,000 customers in 23 of Mississippi's 82 counties. MPCo's Net Metering Report and Interconnection Report for Year Ending 2019 indicates that forty-five (45) customers with a total nameplate capacity of 496.77 kW executed solar Net Metering Interconnection Agreement during 2019. Previously, thirty-seven (37) customers with a total generating capacity of 451.49 kW executed solar Net Metering Interconnection Agreements in 2018. Thirty-eight (38) customers executed solar Net Metering Interconnection Agreements in 2017.

One hundred sixty-three (163) customers have executed Net Metering Interconnection Agreements since the implementation of MPCo's Renewable Energy Net Metering (RENM) Program in September 2016. The 163 RENM interconnected customers (0.0871% of MPCo's customer base) have done the following in 2018: Represent 1,843.63 kW in distributed generation capacity; Delivered 625,980 kWh to the grid; Collected \$34,305.65 from MPCo for the energy exported to the grid. The 1,843.63 kW capacity represents 0.1281% of MPCo's Total System Peak Demand of 1,439.31 MW. MPCo may refuse Net Metering Applications if total Net Metering Interconnection capacity exceeds 3.0% of Total System Peak Demand.

At the end of 2019, MPCo had 194 total distributed generation customers, including distributed renewable generation customers that existed prior to the start of MPCo's Renewable Energy Net Metering Program in September 2016. The 194 total behind-the-meter distributed renewable generation customers at the end of 2019 (0.103% of MPCo's customer base) represent 1,862.61 kW of distributed generation capacity and 0.1294% of MPCo's Total System Peak Demand. To participate in Mississippi Power Co.'s net metering program, visit <https://www.mississippipower.com/residential/ways-to-save/renewable-energy/solar-energy/net-metering---your-bill.html>.

### By the numbers:

Utility	RENMICs* at end of 2016	RENMICs at end of 2017	RENMICs at end of 2018	RENMICs at end of 2019	# of all DG Customers* in 2019	Total Installed RENMICs Capac- ity	% of Peak System De- mand
Entergy MS	10	34	53	75	97	904.6 kW	0.0325%
MS Power Co.	29	67	105	163	194	1,843.63 kW	0.1281%
Total	39	101	158	238	291	2,748.23 kW	

(info as of Dec. 31, 2019)

\*RENMICs = Renewable Energy Net Metering Interconnected Customers

\*DG Customer = Distributed Generation Customer (includes Renewable Energy Net Metering Interconnected Customers & Distributed Generation customers that existed prior to the implementation of the Net Metering programs)

A review of the rate regulated electric utilities' (Entergy MS and MS Power Co.) annual filings found that a total of 238 Renewable Energy Net Metering systems were interconnected to the grid in the as of December 31, 2019. Over the past three years, the number of newly interconnected Renewable Energy Net Metering Systems for each year are: 68 in 2019; 56 in 2018; and, 60 in 2017.

[NOTE: Net metering customers of Entergy MS and MS Power Co. are compensated for net excess generation at a rate of "Avoided Cost of Wholesale Power" plus a "Non-Quantifiable Expected Benefits" adder of 2.5 cents/kWh.]



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## **Cooperative Energy** **[formerly SMEPA] (2011-AD-2)**

Cooperative Energy (CE) provides electrical power for [11 electric distribution cooperatives](#) who in turn serve approximately [432,000 customers](#) in 55 of Mississippi's 82 counties. CE's [Net Metering Report and Interconnection Rule Report for 2019](#) indicate that eighty-six (86) customers with a nameplate capacity of 658.97 kW executed solar Distributed Generation Interconnection Agreements within CE's service area during 2019. Previously, 122 customers with a total generating capacity of 1,032.45 kW had executed solar Distributed Generation Interconnection Agreements in 2018. Seventy-nine (79) customers executed solar Distributed Generation Interconnection Agreements in 2017.



Piney Woods School in Rankin County has a 100 kW fixed-tilt solar array of 300 panels that provides nearly 25% of campus needs.

At the end of 2019, CE and its member cooperatives had a total of 405 solar distributed generation interconnection customers (0.0937% of CE's member cooperative's customer base) with a total interconnected capacity of 3,891.62 kW. Of the 405 interconnected solar distributed generation customers, 366 customers: Delivered 2,000,805 kWh to the grid; Collected \$90,520.63 from CE for the energy exported to the grid (the DG renewable rate for 2019 was \$0.045/kWh); Represent 0.18674% of CE's Total System Peak Demand. To participate in the distributed generation program, check with your local cooperative such as Southern Pine Electric's [Solar FAQ Page](#).

[NOTE: While Cooperative Energy does file an Annual Net Metering and Interconnection Rule Report as required by the Net Metering Rule, Cooperative Energy does not incorporate the 2.5 cents/kWh benefits adder (required by the Net Metering Rule) along with the 4.5 cents/kWh avoided cost rate currently credited to customers for net excess energy delivered to the grid. Due to this difference in excess generation compensation, my office does not label solar-owning customers of CE as Net Metering Customers but rather as Distributed Generation Customers.]

## **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)**

TVA provides electrical power [to 14 municipal and 14 cooperatively owned utilities](#) located primarily in [the northern half of Mississippi](#). TVA and its electric distribution partners are not required to submit an annual Net Metering Report to the MPSC. However, per my request, TVA staff voluntarily provided information on the number and capacity of solar distributed generation installations located in the TVA service area. TVA reported that seventeen (17) new solar installations were interconnected in 2019. At the end of 2019, TVA had a total of ninety-four (94) solar distributed generation interconnected customers with a total generation capacity of 9,404 kW.

At the end of 2017, TVA reported ninety-nine (99) solar customers. At the end of 2018, TVA reported 114 solar customers. The reduction in current numbers is due to expiring contracts previously executed under TVA solar incentive programs such as the Solar Solutions Initiative and Green Power Providers and due to the way that TVA accounts for systems in their database.

TVA's Green Power Providers program stopped accepting new applications effective December 31, 2019 and is closing down. Until a replacement program is implemented, TVA is steering potential renewable power system owners to its [Dispersed Power Production](#) program. Several connection configurations and agreement options can be considered by the solar owner. To participate in the program, call (423) 751-8640 or send an email to TVA at [dpp@tva.gov](mailto:dpp@tva.gov) and request a standard contract.

[NOTE: TVA compensates solar distributed generation customers at their avoided cost rate published each month, typically in the range of 2.5 cents/kWh.]



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## By the numbers:

Utility	Solar DG* Customers at end of 2016	Solar DG Customers at end of 2017	Solar DG Customers at end of 2018	Solar DG Customers at end of 2019	Total Installed Solar DG Capacity	% of Peak System Demand
Cooperative Energy	89	197	319	405	3,891.62 kW	0.18674%
TVA	n/a	99	114	94	9,404 kW	n/a
Total	n/a	296	433	499	kW	

(info as of Dec. 31, 2019)

\*Solar DG = Solar Distributed Generation

A review of the annual electric utility filings (Cooperative Electric and TVA) found that a total of 499 renewable Distributed Generation systems were interconnected to the grid as of December 31, 2019. This was an increase of 66 over the end-of-2018 number of 433 systems.

## Summary of Net Metering in Mississippi

Customer-financed residential solar continues to grow in Mississippi, but at a very modest pace. The inability to recognize and properly value the benefits of solar ultimately harm consumers and frustrates the solar market. At a time when more Mississippians are seeking information about solar, rules and statutes should not create marketplace barriers or restrict customers' energy choice.

A review of the annual electric utility filings found that a total of 790 solar photovoltaic systems were interconnected to the grid in the as of December 31, 2019 (Entergy MS, MS Power, Cooperative Energy and TVA). Note that only 238 of the 790 systems are compensated at the value of distributed generation level as outlined by the current Mississippi Renewable Energy Net Metering Rule.

Earlier I mentioned that there are approximately 2.2 million solar installations in the U.S. When averaged across the 50 states, that is about 44,000 installations per state. But Mississippi has less than 800. There are many reasons that contribute to the lack of investment in Mississippi, including renewable energy policy inconsistency.

Only 41.5% of Mississippi ratepayers are covered by the Commission's Mississippi Renewable Energy Net Metering Rule. The remaining 58.5% of Mississippi ratepayers are customers of rural electric cooperative and municipalities that are not subject to the Rule or are only subject to parts of the Rule. Therefore, there is no policy consistency across the state to support a vibrant, stable solar market that provides equitable economic opportunities for all ratepayers. When the Commission opens a new docket in December 2020 to review the efficacy and fairness of the Net Metering and Interconnection Rules, it has an opportunity to revise or modify the Rules in a way that stimulates the emergence of the state's advanced energy market that is in the public interest and good for all ratepayers.

True net metering is a billing mechanism that credits solar energy system owners 1:1 at the full retail value for the net excess electricity they add to the grid and any excess credits are compensated for on an annualized basis. A single meter tracks electricity that moves to and from the grid. While the Commission adopted the Mississippi Renewable Energy Net Metering Rule, the Rule actually provides compensation at less than full retail value and promotes a 2-channel billing method that requires installation of an additional meter or the installation of a multi-channel meter to measure electric usage and excess energy exported to the grid and credited on a monthly basis.

In the neighboring state of Arkansas, a true net metering policy is utilized.





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## Arkansas Net Metering

Under current law, Arkansas net metering customers may generate their own power and receive a 1:1 retail credit for any unused power sent back to their local utility. Arkansas consumers have argued that customer-financed solar systems are a net benefit for utility systems and all ratepayers through long-term avoided costs and have thus convinced policy makers to keep true net metering policies in place. Because of that certainty, Arkansas recorded the largest annual increase in the number of net-metering systems ever in 2019. A review of electric utility reports recently filed with the Arkansas Public Service Commission found a total of 2,320 net-metering systems as of December 31, 2019, an 812-net increase over the end-of-2018 number of 1,508 systems (a 53.8% increase). [Arkansas installed more solar in one year than Mississippi has current installations across the state.] Positive legislative action has spurred greater adoption of net metering systems, particularly among cities, counties and school districts seeking to deploy solar and other advanced technologies. Meanwhile, the APSC is currently reviewing their net



Poultry Farm in Leake County uses solar to offset production costs.

## Solar Guide for Consumers

In May 2017, the Mississippi Attorney General Consumer Protection Division in cooperation with the MPSC and other stakeholders released ["A Consumer's Guide to Solar Power in Mississippi."](#) The document is a product of an ongoing multisector effort to protect and inform consumers in this product arena. The guide is intended to offer potential solar owners guidance when evaluating options to install a solar photovoltaic system for the generation and self-supply of electricity.

### A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO **SOLAR POWER IN MISSISSIPPI**





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In honor of the 50th Earth Day today, we encourage you to reflect on how we can make our planet a more sustainable and livable place. Important ways you can help include conserving natural resources, saving energy, recycling materials and reducing waste. After all, it is the next generation that will inherit what we leave to them.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **17** complaints in the Central District.

Telecommunications	<b>7</b>
Electric Companies	<b>9</b>
Water/Sewage	<b>1</b>

Last week, the Central District received a total of **148** complaints from consumers against potential telemarketers through our no call app, website and mail-ins. The top three general issues reported by consumers are related to health coverage, credit cards and auto warranties.

The [Federal Trade Commission](https://www.ftc.gov) recently reminded consumers who are home, practicing social distancing during the Covid-19 situation, to remain vigilant of tech support calls. If you get a call from someone claiming to be a Microsoft technician, saying there are viruses on your system, hang up the phone. It's a scam. Tech support scammers want you to pay for services you don't need to fix problems that don't exist. More tips to protect yourself against this scam and more information on the latest Corona virus related scams seen by the FTC can be found here: [https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/04/hang-tech-support-calls?utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/04/hang-tech-support-calls?utm_source=govdelivery).

We encourage consumers to file telemarketing complaints with the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.donotcall.gov/> in addition to filing complaints with the Mississippi Public Service Commission.