

Not the First “First” for BrightRidge, TVA and Silicon Ranch Partnership

By Matt Brown

This past June, in a historic unprecedented [policy shift](#), the Tennessee Valley Authority included a flexible generation provision in its new contracts with local power companies (LPCs) to reduce the amount of energy they consumed from TVA by locally generating up to 5% of their energy needs. That is why it has been such an honor for Silicon Ranch to be a part of this groundbreaking effort as the Nashville-based company will build, own, and operate a new 9 MW solar facility in Washington County, Tennessee under the new flexible generation program to benefit BrightRidge and its customers. The project represents the first such agreement ever executed in the Tennessee Valley.

“Today truly marks a milestone, not only for this community and our partners, but also for the entire Tennessee Valley,” said Silicon Ranch Co-Founder and CEO Reagan Farr. “We applaud TVA for empowering LPCs to leverage low-cost renewable energy to meet customer needs and recruit new business.”

However, this is not the first “first” for BrightRidge, TVA, and Silicon Ranch to partner in a continued effort to empower those living in the Valley through an increasingly flexible, cost-effective, resilient, community-based solar energy system. On May 7, 2019, BrightRidge, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and Silicon Ranch “Flipped the Switch” on Telford Solar Farm, a 5-megawatt solar farm outside of Jonesborough, Tennessee and the Tri-Cities’ first community solar project.

Through the Telford Solar Farm, BrightRidge, Silicon Ranch and the Tennessee Valley Authority led the way for solar energy in Northeast Tennessee. With more than 41,000 solar panels housed on nearly 40 acres of land, the Telford Solar Farm is capable of producing enough carbon-free electricity to power more than 500 homes over the course of a year. The facility was designed to generate roughly 8 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually with zero water consumption.

In the process of building the project, Silicon Ranch invested millions of dollars of private capital into the local community and created more than 100 construction jobs, most of them hired locally.

“This project is more than clean, low-cost energy – it demonstrates the value of public power by directly connecting our community with a cleaner future,” said Jay Stowe, senior vice president of Distributed Energy Resources for TVA.¹

Developed, owned, and operated by Silicon Ranch, the project has proven a net positive for the local tax base of the surrounding community of Washington County all while imposing minimal demands on the local public infrastructure.

¹ <http://jcnewsandneighbor.com/ground-broken-on-solar-farm-project-near-jonesborough/>

“Many of our commercial and residential customers are unable to access the benefits of solar because they can’t afford the cost of installation, live in multifamily buildings, or their rooftops cannot support the weight of solar panels,” Jeff Dykes, BrightRidge CEO said. “BrightRidge is pleased to lead the way with a community solar offering that provides access to all of our customers, regardless of circumstance, so they can purchase clean power direct without the expense and upkeep of installing panels on their private property.”²

The power produced by the Telford Solar Farm is distributed under a Community Solar program, where Silicon Ranch sells the power to TVA while BrightRidge sells the Renewable Energy Credits produced by this facility to the customers it serves giving them bill credit. Highly popular among BrightRidge’s customers, subscriptions to the program sold out within a couple of weeks of the LPC marketing its 500kW allotment.

“As Tennessee’s largest independent solar power producer, Silicon Ranch is honored to partner with BrightRidge and TVA to generate low-cost, clean energy and support economic development in our home state,” said Silicon Ranch Chairman and Co-Founder Matt Kisber. “We’re currently building solar farms from Memphis to the Tri-Cities, proving that solar has a bright future in the Tennessee Valley.”³

With projects in the Memphis area as well, Telford expanded Silicon Ranch’s presence to span the entirety of the Volunteer State. By doing so, being the topographically diverse state that Tennessee is with three distinct regions, this project also demonstrated the versatility of solar in its ability to power communities, businesses and schools in a wide range of geographies working with LPCs of all sizes.

² <http://jcnewsandneighbor.com/ground-broken-on-solar-farm-project-near-jonesborough/>

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