



Local Power, Solar Power

- Rob Hamilton | 12/1/2020

On Silicon Ranch's new podcast, *Silicon Ranch Radio*, host Jim Bausell explores the challenges and opportunities of the solar industry with thought leaders, industry and technology innovators, and our partners and community members.

The show recently released a series we're calling 'Local Power, Solar Power,' where Jim is joined by experts with deep understanding of the benefits of locally-sourced solar power. These conversations investigate how local solar farming is lighting up communities across the country, with special emphasis on recent developments in the Tennessee Valley, exploring what Jim calls the "farm-to-outlet movement."



Over the three-part series, our intrepid host sits down in Nashville with **Silicon Ranch VP of Business Development (and TVA alum) Matt Brown**, travels to east Tennessee to visit with **BrightRidge Energy Authority CEO Jeff Dykes**, and speaks with **Ouachita Electric Cooperative GM Mark Cayce** in Arkansas to hear more about their experiences driving the transition to more local solar energy.

Unlike conventional forms of energy production, solar power does not have to be imported. Instead it is homegrown, where capital is invested in local communities, and output is consumed via the local grid.

Through more distributed energy generation coupled with, and bolstered by, initiatives such as TVA's Flexibility Program, Silicon Ranch is working with Local Power Companies (LPCs) across the Valley to provide clean, reliable, cost-effective solar energy options that are improving the quality of life, and creating new business and jobs for the communities these projects serve.



In [Part One](#) of this series, Silicon Ranch's Vice President of Business Development, Matt Brown, discusses the company's approach to ensure that the potential benefits of these projects are maximized at the local level.

"It's not always about doing the easy project. It's about doing the right thing for all parties and that's why I'm proud to work at Silicon Ranch," says Matt. "From a commercial and industrial customer standpoint, we always try and develop win-win-win solutions. And that was something from my utility days that I understood needed to happen in order for solar to be successful. You need to make sure the utility is included and they are kept in the loop, but you need to make sure you're addressing the C&I clients' needs and goals and objectives as well."

TVA's new Flexibility Program is only the latest in the game-changing new policies developing across the country to empower distribution utilities to self-generate or procure Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) via clean renewable energy technologies. According to Matt, "This means more local control, and significant cost savings for the local power companies and ultimately their customers," as well as closer collaboration with customers on the community's needs and wants.

In [Part Two](#) of this series, Jim sits down with Jeff Dykes, President and CEO of BrightRidge Electric Authority, a public utility based in

Johnson City, Tennessee, to discuss why BrightRidge is going solar, what initiatives such as TVA's Flexibility Program mean to LPCs, and the value added by having the right partners on solar power projects.

"BrightRidge is looking to the future," says Jeff. "For us, partnering with Silicon Ranch, who is in the solar field, really brings some expertise that we probably couldn't get internally...because those partnerships [with Silicon Ranch and TVA], by bringing along the knowledge and background, they allow you to not make mistakes along the way."

Part Three of this series will be released later this month where Jim talks with Ouachita Electric Cooperative's GM, Mark Cayce, to discuss how the Arkansas co-op has used solar power to retain a major local employer and ensure the project was a win for everyone involved.

A new day is dawning as more and more communities take advantage of their ability to harvest the sun's energy. Now is the time for your community to secure solar energy and all of its benefits while minimizing the risks associated with more conventional forms of energy. This is local power, solar power. Tune in to learn more.

- [Silicon Ranch Radio Ep. 003 – Local Power, Solar Power: Part 1](#)
- [Silicon Ranch Radio Ep. 004 – Local Power, Solar Power: Part 2](#)

About Silicon Ranch Radio

A production of Silicon Ranch, this podcast features host Jim Bausell as he explores the American Energy Solar Frontier. Listen in as we discover challenges and opportunities facing the industry with thought leaders, industry and technology leaders, and our partners and community members.