

## Navy, Air Force Break Ground on Florida's Largest Solar Projects

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*From Navy Office of Information and Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs*

The Departments of the Navy and the Air Force broke ground with Gulf Power, a subsidiary of Southern Company, at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, marking the start of construction for three large-scale solar electric generating facilities Dec. 16.

Combined, these facilities will have approximately 1.5 million solar panels that could generate up to 157 megawatts (MW) of direct current (DC) or 120 MW of alternating current (AC) power. This translates to powering roughly 18,000 homes on a sunny day.

Gulf Power and its third party developer, Coronal Development Services, will construct three facilities—one at NAS Pensacola, one at NAS Whiting Field and one at Eglin Air Force Base.

On April 16, 2015, the Florida Public Service Commission approved all three project plans. Respectively, the Departments of the Navy and the Air Force signed land lease agreements with Gulf Power on Oct. 28 and Nov. 24.

Notable groundbreaking ceremony presenters and attendees included Dennis V. McGinn, assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations and environment; Miranda A.A. Ballentine, assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations, environment and energy; Capt. Keith W. Hoskins, commanding officer, NAS Pensacola; Capt. Todd A. Bahlau, commanding officer, NAS Whiting Field; Col. Matthew W. Higer, vice commander, 96th Test Wing, Eglin Air Force Base; and Stan Connally, president and CEO of Gulf Power.

These initiatives support the Department of Defense's commitment to renewable energy and show the joint leadership displayed in pursuit of energy security.

McGinn said the collaboration between Gulf Power and the Department of the Navy to construct new solar facilities on Florida Navy installations will have a myriad of benefits.

"Together, we can provide physical security to the assets, increase the regional grid resiliency and upgrade the energy infrastructure where our Sailors and Aviators live and work, as well as stimulate economic activity through development. Energy, the economy, the environment and our national security are bound together; you cannot affect one without affecting the others, and these projects have positive benefits in all four dimensions," said McGinn.

Ballentine said this type of enhanced use lease highlights how public and private collaboration benefits the Air Force, industry and local communities.

"The Air Force is focused on using these types of partnerships as a viable business model to improve the service's energy resiliency and provide mission assurance through energy assurance," she said.

"Renewable energy projects like this are good for the nation because it increases grid diversity, improves resiliency, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution."

Together, these facilities will be the largest photovoltaic arrays in Florida and have the potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 4.6 million tons.

According to Stan Connally, Gulf Power President and CEO, these solar projects help Gulf Power to further diversify its energy portfolio and support the mission to provide safe, affordable and reliable energy to its Northwest Florida customers.

"This is an important collaboration between Gulf Power, the Navy and Air Force," said Connally. "Through careful planning, we've been able to work alongside our military partners to help support solutions for them to meet federal renewable energy and energy conservation mandates, while Gulf Power pursues cost-effective forms of renewable energy at the same time."

The parties anticipate these solar facilities to be operational by Dec. 2016 and serve all Gulf Power customers. Once operational, the respective facilities are estimated to generate the following numbers on a sunny day:

- \* NAS Pensacola: 65 MW DC or 50 MW AC to power approximately 7,400 Escambia County homes
- \* NAS Whiting Field: 52 MW DC or 40 MW AC to power approximately 6,100 Santa Rosa County homes
- \* Eglin Air Force Base: 40 MW DC or 30 MW AC to power approximately 4,500 Okaloosa County homes

For more news from Commander, Navy Installations Command, visit [www.navy.mil/local/cni/](http://www.navy.mil/local/cni/).