

North Western Electric, Buckeye Power introduce OurSolar

North Western Electric Cooperative and Buckeye Power are helping co-op members throughout the state take advantage of locally produced renewable energy - without the personal hassle and costs.

Through a community solar program call OurSolar, Buckeye Power - Ohio's generation and transmission cooperative - will build new solar panel arrays at several co-op locations throughout Ohio, bringing more emission-free energy to Ohio's electric cooperatives. North Western Electric will be one of the sites, with an anticipated 50-kilowatt array expected to be installed at the co-op's facility within a year.

How much will it cost? For the average member, only about 35 cents per year.

"Interest in renewable energy is growing," said Darin Thorp, president and CEO of North Western Electric, "But for many people, installing a renewable energy project on their own is just too expensive or too difficult, so as a cooperative, we're taking it on together."

OurSolar reflects North Western Electric and Buckeye Power's balanced approach to electricity generation. While most of the power supplied to North Western Electric will continue to be produced by coal-fired generation that is among the cleanest of its kind in the world, OurSolar gives cooperative members the option to supplement that baseload power - that is, electricity production that is highly reliable and always available - with locally produced energy.

"We believe in strength in numbers," said Pearl Rakes, communications/public information specialist at North Western Electric. "As a cooperative, we feel this is an effort we can best tackle together."

The first OurSolar project is being installed at Consolidated Electric Cooperative in Delaware, Ohio. The entire project is expected to take a year to roll out across the state.