



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Solar Farm 2.0 Construction Starts with Commercial Operations Expected This Winter

CHAMPAIGN, IL – Construction is underway on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s Solar Farm 2.0, with a commercial operation date expected for early 2021. The new 54-acre, 12.1 megawatt (MWdc) solar array is located north of Curtis Road, between First Street and U.S. Route 45, next to the Village of Savoy.

Once completed, the solar farm will produce 20,000 MWh annually, almost tripling the university’s existing on-site renewable energy generation. Through a combination of utility-scale installations, integrated facility rooftop arrays, and wind power purchase agreements, clean power usage at the U of I will increase to more than 52,000 MWh per year, which is over 10 percent of the campus electrical demand.

“Solar Farm 2.0 is an example of the important work that continues on the Urbana campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The array adds to an already impressive renewable energy portfolio at the university and moves the campus closer to achieving its pledge of carbon neutrality and building resilience to climate change within the local community,” said Dr. Mohamed Attalla, executive director of Facilities & Services.

The project developer, [Sol Systems, LLC](#) (Washington, DC), has contracted with [Inovateus Solar, LLC](#) (South Bend, IN), to perform engineering, procurement, and construction for the array. The Solar Farm 2.0 design features 31,122 bifacial PV modules, with 26 units comprising each of the 1,197 strings. Bifacial solar panels take in energy from both sides of the panel, utilizing light reflected from the ground for greater efficiency.

“To deliver a project that features bifacial modules on single-axis trackers and a native pollinator habitat is a unique opportunity and is a model for the industry,” said Jeff Miller, senior director of business development for Sol Customer Solutions, the joint-venture between Sol Systems and Capital Dynamics who is financing, owning, and operating the system. “Inovateus is just the kind of construction partner that we look to for setting a high bar in sustainable business practices and innovative work.”

Inovateus Solar is implementing their commitment to zero construction waste for the project, which means preventing any material from the site being directly deposited into a landfill.

“The zero construction waste initiative is one of our important sustainability goals that we share with our partners and customers. To be more environmentally responsible, we are constantly critiquing the way we do business and build solar projects to minimize our footprint on the planet,” said Tyler Kanczuzewski, vice president of marketing and sustainability for Inovateus.

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While producing renewable energy for the campus, Solar Farm 2.0 will also act as a significant resilient landscape and pollinator habitat, with native plantings located throughout the array. Once completed, the site will also serve as a demonstration site for pollinator-friendly solar arrays, following the requirements of the state's Pollinator-Friendly Solar Site Act (Illinois Pub. Act 100-1022).

The seed mix planned for use under the panels includes 17 plants, such as little bluestem, side oats grama, purple prairie clover, black-eyed Susan, long-headed coneflower, and others. These plants will be complemented by a recently installed landscaped buffer on the southern edge of the solar farm, along Curtis Road. This will support the university's continued recognition as a Bee Campus USA by the Xerces Society.

Contributing industrial expertise to research projects or special events and making data available for analytics is an objective of the *Facilities & Services Strategic Plan 2019-2023*. Faculty have already identified research projects that will use the Solar Farm 2.0 installation, primarily related to the pollinator-supportive plants under and around the panels.

The array achieves the 2015 Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP) objective to expand on-campus solar energy production. As part of the Solar Farm 2.0 power purchase agreement, the university will also retain all of the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) produced by the array.

Initial construction activities will include road, fence, and equipment pad installation before the project work transitions to the setup of posts, racking, and modules. The site's electrical assembly and finalization of associated mechanical components will take place later this winter.

MEDIA ADVISORY: Site visits and project staff interviews are available upon request. For progress updates, visit <https://go.fs.illinois.edu/SolarFarm2>.

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Sol Customer Solutions (SCS) offers commercial, municipal, and educational customers competitive and compelling renewable energy solutions. As businesses, cities, and schools increasingly transition into more sustainable, resilient and low-cost energy, SCS focuses on delivering a comprehensive and integrated suite of renewable energy and storage solutions.



As a joint venture between [Sol Systems](#) and [Capital Dynamics](#), SCS provides new access to large pools of institutional capital alongside one of the most experienced solar finance and development platforms in the United States. SCS leverages the development business and customer relationships established by Sol Systems together with Capital Dynamics' Clean Energy Infrastructure business that is home to a market-leading clean energy infrastructure platform with approximately \$6.4 billion of assets under management.¹

Facilities & Services (F&S) provides all physical plant, operational, and essential services for sustaining an environment that fosters the research, teaching, and public engagement activities of the university. The organization employs more than 1,000 dedicated staff serving in both civil service and academic professional positions. The F&S goal is to support the university's education, research, and outreach missions by improving the physical condition of the facilities and grounds, reducing energy consumption through education and use of alternative fuel sources, and increasing customer satisfaction by providing quality services in a responsive, reliable, and customer-focused manner. www.fs.illinois.edu

¹ As of September 30, 2019. Includes assets under discretionary management and tax equity assets. Tax equity is a financing solution for renewable energy projects.