

SMUD News Release

Sacramento Municipal Utility District

News Media Services

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SMUD celebrates 20 years of solar power

Dedicates expansion of one of the world's first solar plants

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) celebrated the 20th anniversary of one of its first major solar installations, PV1, with the dedication of new solar arrays at the site, PV6. The new installation increases generation from the solar plant to 3.2 megawatts (MW), enough to power more than 2,200 single-family homes. Twenty years ago, PV1 generated one MW, powering about 700 typical homes.

SMUD PV1, built in 1984, was one of the first in the world and continues to perform extremely well by industry standards, operating at about 80 percent of original performance. The plant has grown over the past two decades and with the dedication of the sixth installation, the plant now has nearly 5000 solar panels. Most of the panels are mounted on trackers that follow the sun across the sky maximizing the capture of solar energy and conversion to electricity. Nearby, the cooling towers of the closed Rancho Seco nuclear site can be seen and the construction sounds of SMUD's 500 MW gas-fired power plant can be heard.

SMUD continues to be a leader in renewable energy. In the past year, nine percent of SMUD's energy deliveries came from renewable energy sources like solar, wind power, biomass and small hydroelectric facilities. SMUD has committed to increase the renewables portion of its power mix to 10% by 2006 and to 20% by 2011.

SMUD leads all utilities in the United States with more than 8.3 MW of installed solar on area buildings, homes, parking structures and in open fields such as PV1-6. In recent years, SMUD has expanded its program from large-scale arrays to customer-owned solar energy systems atop homes and businesses, or integrated in building materials.

In its 20-year existence, SMUD PV has also improved local air quality. Because solar technology is clean and renewable, no fossil fuels are used to generate power, offsetting power plant emissions equal to approximately 1,200 cars being removed from the road.

For more information about SMUD's solar programs please visit www.smud.org.

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