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New solar development planned for 300 acres in Richland

RICHLAND, Wash. – Energy Northwest and Tucci Energy Services are planning a new partnership to develop what could become Washington’s largest utility-scale photovoltaic solar project.

The companies signed a letter of intent for Energy Northwest to lease Tucci Energy Services 300 acres of land, located north of Richland, that would allow Tucci Energy Services to build around 75 megawatts of photovoltaic solar panels, which could provide electricity to more than 11,000 homes.

Construction is projected for spring of 2022, and Tucci Energy Services is actively seeking potential customers for the solar electricity.

“We are thrilled to be part of such a groundbreaking project for sustainable energy that will benefit thousands of families,” said Mary Tucci, chief operations officer of the woman-owned, Seattle-based company.

Energy Northwest, a joint operating agency formed by the Washington Legislature, is committed to exploring and developing a variety of clean energy resources for the region to help meet the state’s Clean Energy Transformation Act goals by 2045. Energy Northwest’s member public utilities are prioritized in the opportunity to join the project at competitive cost, and the agency is providing its expertise as a regional clean-energy provider.

“This underscores Energy Northwest’s commitment to affordably and reliably meeting the region’s electricity needs,” Energy Northwest CEO Brad Sawatzke said. “With a combination of renewables, battery storage, hydroelectric power and existing and new nuclear, we believe the region can affordably achieve 100% carbon-free electricity.”

The Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC) says the Tri-Cities is well-suited for solar energy because it has the available land, the infrastructure to support power projects and abundant sunshine.

“When TRIDEC and our community partners worked to transfer this land from the Department of Energy, our goal was to further establish the Tri-Cities as the ‘Clean Energy Hub of the Pacific Northwest’, and this is exactly the type of project we had in mind,” said David Reeploeg, TRIDEC vice president for Federal Programs.

The Port of Benton and Tri-Cities Research District echo excitement for this development, which reinforces this designated Tri-Cities Innovation Partnership Zone to lead the state in the creation of clean reliable energy production.

“Tucci’s project is a prime example of the premise of the land transfer; showcasing global interest in generating clean energy in the Tri-Cities while creating economic prosperity for the State of Washington,” said Miles Thomas, Director of Economic Development for the Port of Benton and Executive Director of the Tri-Cities Research District.

Tucci Energy Services expressed interest in developing the 300 acres in October. Potelco Inc. of Sumner, Washington, will serve as the engineering, procurement and construction contractor.

The 300-acre property is adjacent to the newly energized Horn Rapids Solar, Storage and Training project. The Horn Rapids project is also a partnership between Energy Northwest and Tucci Energy Services.

Land use background

On Sept. 30, 2015, the Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office transferred 1,641 acres of the Hanford site to TRIDEC and the Tri-Cities community for economic development. In 2016, TRIDEC transferred ownership of 300 acres to Energy Northwest.

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About Energy Northwest

Energy Northwest owns and operates a diverse mix of 100% clean electricity generating resources: hydro, solar, battery storage and wind projects, and the third-largest provider of electricity in Washington – the Columbia Generating Station nuclear power facility. These projects provide carbon-free electricity at the cost of generation – enough clean, cost-effective and reliable energy to power more than a million homes each year. As an independent joint operating agency of Washington state, Energy Northwest comprises 27 public power member utilities from across the state serving more than 1.5 million customers. The agency continually explores new generation projects to meet its members’ needs. www.energy-northwest.com.