



**COLORADO**  
Energy Office



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Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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**Colorado Energy Office, GRID Alternatives announce Delta-Montrose  
community solar project**

**Delta-Montrose Electric Association**

DENVER – June 2, 2016 – The Colorado Energy Office (CEO), GRID Alternatives (GRID) and Delta-Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) announce the development of a community solar array that will lower the electric bills of qualified low-income residents in the DMEA service territory. The project is part of a statewide initiative designed to demonstrate how the community solar model can be optimized to reduce energy costs for utilities' highest need customers - those who spend more than 4 percent of income on utility bills.

“Today we are symbolically and literally breaking new ground, as this will soon be the largest community solar array in the nation dedicated solely to low-income households. We want to thank Delta-Montrose Electric Association and GRID Alternatives for making this vision a reality, and we look forward to additional rural utility projects coming this summer,” said Colorado Energy Office Director Jeff Ackermann.

GRID received a \$1.2 million CEO grant in August 2015 to partner with utilities to implement low-income community solar. Earlier this year, CEO and GRID announced utility project partners, each of which is piloting a slight variation on the low-income community solar model to address the unique needs of rural utility service areas and their customers. The projects selected are both affordable and scalable for utility partners, and offer great potential to expand across the state.

“This community solar installation with DMEA will be GRID’s largest solar project developed to date. Being able to deliver impactful projects and programs at larger scales will continue to make GRID’s work more efficient and include more families we haven’t previously been able to reach. Offsetting energy burden for low-income families

has never been done at this scale, and we are excited to be working with great partners like DMEA to bring these impacts to fruition,” GRID Executive Director Chuck Watkins said.

Chief Executive Officer Jason Bronec, said DMEA is interested in expanding renewable energy access with this impactful and innovative model:

"As a member-owned cooperative, our true purpose is to improve the quality of life for our members and the communities they live in. Our affordable community solar array helps further this purpose by providing access to local renewable energy for members that are often underserved."

In the region, GRID partnered with Solar Energy International (SEI) to expand solar education for GRID’s job trainees - bringing experience in the field together with an internationally renowned certified training organization. GRID also worked with Delta High School solar students - a unique group of students who are preparing for jobs in the solar industry. The students toured the DMEA job site, and GRID presented its mission, program with DMEA, and its workforce training opportunities. Students from the class will be able to gain hands-on experience as volunteers installing the 151 kW system, and build on their classroom training with SEI.

On Friday June 3, in Delta, GRID’s programmatic barn-raising model will engage members of the community to come together to install the 150 kilowatt solar array. Participants will include employees from the utility, the subscribers benefitting, local elected officials, schools and others to install 570 solar panels that will help as many as 45 qualified families cut their electric bills in half.

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### **About Colorado Energy Office**

The Colorado Energy Office works to improve the effective use of all of Colorado's energy resources and the efficient consumption of energy in all economic sectors that benefit the economic and environmental health of the state. Visit the website at [www.colorado.gov/energy](http://www.colorado.gov/energy).

### **About GRID Alternatives**

GRID Alternatives is America’s largest nonprofit solar installer bringing clean energy technology and job training to low-income families and underserved communities through a network of

community partners, volunteers, and philanthropic supporters. For more information, visit [www.gridalternatives.org](http://www.gridalternatives.org).

**About DMEA:**

DMEA is a rural electric distribution cooperative, located in Montrose, Colorado. DMEA was founded in 1938, as Delta-Montrose Rural Power Lines Association. A board of directors from nine districts covering three counties governs the cooperative. DMEA serves approximately 32,000 residential, commercial and industrial meters, on over 3,000 miles of cooperative-owned distribution line. <http://www.dmea.com>.