

Maine’s largest solar farm expected to go online in 2016

BY DARREN FISHELL
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — The Maine Public Utilities Commission expects the state’s largest solar power project to date — planned for Waldo County — to come online later this year.

The project is one of four pilot projects that won the ability to enter long-term contracts with the state’s two major utilities, pending local approval. The PUC announced the winners for the pilot program in December. On Friday, it released an order outlining more details about each.

The largest project of the four is the 9.9-megawatt solar farm proposal in the town of Monroe, a project with 70 percent ownership held by Cianbro Development Corp. and 30 percent by solar developer Clear Energy LLC.

In order to qualify as a pilot project under the state law that created the program in 2009, a qualifying local company must have a majority stake in the project.

The Monroe project would receive 8.5 cents per kilowatt hour, the lowest of the four projects. It still requires local support, according to the PUC, but is anticipated to enter operation this fall.

The commission also approved Georges River Energy, held by members of the family that owns Robbins Lumber in Seasmont, which would use wood waste from the sawmill and local logging contractors to fuel a 7.5-megawatt

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biomass system that produces both heat and electricity.

It expects to come online in early 2018 and would receive 9.9 cents per kilowatt hour. The pilot projects set a maximum bid of 10 cents per kilowatt hour to qualify.

And a wind power project originally proposed for land in Fort Fairfield moved a mile north in its final iteration, on 100 acres of farmland in Limestone. The wind power project is from Shamrock Partners, led by Freeport resident Sue Jones.

Jones had proposed and won pilot project approval for the Fort Fairfield site, but that plan was essentially killed, she told the BDN last fall, by an ordinance for wind projects that established a one-mile setback from landowners not involved in the project.

That project would receive 8.3 cents per kilowatt hour and still requires a local resolution of support. The project is expected to come online by at least late 2018.

The PUC also approved a combined solar and hydropower system near the American Woolen Mill in Dover-Foxcroft, with a combined capacity of 396 kilowatts, the smallest of the group. It would receive 10 cents per kilowatt hour.

Small market with big potential

Emera focuses on possibilities of northern Maine electric grid

BY ANTHONY BRINO
BDN STAFF

With less than 70,000 inhabitants but many miles of sunny, windy hills, Aroostook County has a bright future in renewable energy, in the eyes of Emera Maine executives Steve Sloan and Alan Richardson.

Emera, northern Maine’s power utility, is focusing on the reliability of the region’s aging grid and preparing for upgrades while studying future options, including the potential of wind and solar power, said Sloan, transmission manager, and Richardson, the president of Emera Maine.

The two executives were speaking with members of the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce at Cafe Sopresso in Presque Isle, during a warm winter with fewer power outages than usual. Despite that reliability, northern Maine’s electric grid is in need of some rehabilitation and renovation, Sloan said in a presentation.

Aroostook County’s grid is “heavily dependent on supply from New Brunswick” and also “has some weaknesses,” he said. Overall, half of northern Maine’s 350 miles of transmission lines are more than 40 years old, and at times in recent years electricity generators like the ReEnergy biomass plant have been forced to stay open by the Northern Maine Independent System Administrator, the nonprofit manager of northern Maine’s grid, to ensure there would be enough capacity for residential and business users.

The Tinker hydroelectric dam, about a mile downstream and across the U.S. border from Fort Fairfield, has a capacity of 34 megawatts that carries power to consumers in Aroostook County, but its transmission lines are in need of repair.



ANTHONY BRINO | BDN

The Tinker hydroelectric dam along the Aroostook River, downstream of Fort Fairfield. The transmission line connection at Tinker, which brings energy into Maine, is slated for an upgrade.

Emera and the New Brunswick utility are slated to invest in upgrades to the lines and connections at Tinker. It’s a lower-cost, short-term solution to the reliability problem, and was approved by the Maine Public Utilities Commission, rather than Emera’s proposed connection to a power station in Woodstock, New Brunswick.

The upgrades at the Tinker dam will include a new transformer and a higher capacity, but in the long-term Emera is looking to win approval for \$175 million in transmission projects through 2020, 60 percent of that representing replacements of aging infrastructure.

Emera Maine, a part of a Nova Scotia-based utility firm, is also looking to long-term solutions for the next 20 and 30 years.

Among the possibilities the company has been studying are new power generation, demand-side efficiency programs and transmission links such as to ISO New England, which would fully link northern Maine’s grid to the

rest of New England, Sloan said.

At the same time, the region has the opportunity to generate more renewable energy and benefit from selling it at a premium to southern New England states with clean energy mandates, like the pending Number 9 Wind Farm in central Aroostook County would do.

“We do have wind, the ability to produce renewable energy, and the world is paying a big premium,” said Richardson, the president and COO of Emera Maine.

As with the 119-turbine Number 9 Wind Farm, the costs would be paid by consumers in Massachusetts and Connecticut, with the region benefiting from the energy-related jobs and tax payments, Richardson said.

Along with wind, Richardson said that Emera and other utilities want to see rooftop solar expand, as the costs of solar voltaic technology fall, despite the disagreements over net metering and how to pay rooftop solar customers for feeding energy into the grid.

Market Review

at end of

awful January

BY NOEL RANDEWICH
REUTERS

Wall Street surged over 2 per-
cent on Friday after the Bank of
Japan unexpectedly cut interest
rates and Microsoft led a major
rally in technology shares, repair-
ing some of the damage to the S&P
500's worst January since 2009.

Slammed by collapsing oil pri-
ces that have fed doubts about the
health of the global economy,
stocks have had a volatile start to
the year. At one point last week,
the S&P's loss for 2016 reached 11
percent before recovering to end the
month down 5 percent.

The index rose 2.48 percent on
Friday, its strongest day since Sep-
tember.

"Sentiment certainly had swung
to a wildly negative scenario," said
Michael Church, president of Addi-
son Capital Management in Philadel-
phia. "What happens if there is not a
recession? What happens if China
stabilizes and the Fed doesn't raise
rates aggressively?"

Global equities got a surprise
boost on Friday after Japan's cen-
tral bank cut a benchmark rate
below zero to stimulate its econo-
my.

Stocks were also lifted by weak
fourth-quarter U.S. gross domestic
product growth data, which bol-
stered arguments that the Federal
Reserve might go slower than ex-
pected on future rate hikes.

While the Fed has not ruled out
a rate hike in March, many inves-
tors believe recent global econom-
ic and financial turmoil may lead
it to wait.

Microsoft shares jumped 5.83

Consolidated Stocks				Indexes										Currencies								
	Close	Chg	Div		Close	Chg	Div		52-Wk High	52-Wk Low	Close	Chg	Chg%	Yr	Mo	Qtr	1 Yr. Chg%		Last	Chg	Qtr	Year
3M Co	151.00	+3.68	4.1	IntlBcsh	23.19	+0.52	1.0	Dow Jones indus.	18351	15370	16466.30	+396.66	+2.47	▲	▼	▼	-5.46	Euro	0.923	+0.009	+0.014	+0.040
ABB Ltd	17.30	+0.37		JPMorgCh	59.50	+2.22	0.6	Dow Jones Transport	9215	6403	6906.76	+204.79	+3.06	▲	▼	▼	-21.97	British Pound	0.702	+0.006	+0.054	+0.038
AbbVie	54.90	-0.95	2.3	Kohls	49.75	+1.76	1.8	Dow Jones Utility	653	540	611.35	+12.16	+2.03	▲	▲	▲	-6.25	Canadian Dollar	1.397	-0.006	+0.089	+0.135
AbtLab	37.85	+1.14	1.0	LillyEli	78.10	+2.29		Nasdaq composite	5232	4292	4613.95	+107.28	+2.38	▲	▼	▼	-1.48	Japanese Yen	121.06	+2.250	+0.450	+2.800
AEP	60.97	+1.52	2.2	Loews	73.01	+0.14	2.0	NYSE AMEX composite	2556	1869	2085.22	+43.36	+2.12	▲	▲	▼	-14.96	Mexican Peso	18.100	-0.227	+1.608	+3.303
Aeropostl	0.26	+0.01		Lowes	71.66	+2.43	0.3	NYSE composite	11255	8938	9632.71	+234.92	+2.50	▲	▲	▼	-9.90	Swiss Franc	1.023	+0.009	+0.035	+0.099
Aetna	101.84	+3.05	1.0	McDnlds	123.78	+1.40	1.1	S&P 500	2135	1812	1940.24	+46.88	+2.48	▲	▲	▼	-4.01	Israeli Shekel	3.961	+0.011	+0.102	+0.028
AFAC	57.96	-0.35	1.6	Merck	50.67	+1.47	3.6	S&P Mid cap 400	1551	1215	1317.74	+41.21	+3.23	▲	▲	▼	-9.46	Norwegian Krone	8.679	+0.065	+0.197	+0.851
AK Steel	2.04	+0.09	0.0	MetLife	44.65	+0.87	1.8	Wilshire 5000	22537	18550	19926.10	+491.78	+2.53	▲	▲	▼	-6.58	South African Rand	15.891	-0.302	+2.072	+4.341
ALCATEL LUCENT	3.94	+0.06		Microsof	55.09	+3.04	1.5	Russell 2000	1296	958	1035.38	+32.11	+3.20	▲	▼	▼	-13.01					
Allergan	284.43	+2.67		Mondelcoz	43.10	+1.55	1.4															
Allstate	60.60	+1.38	1.2	Monsanto	90.60	+2.80	0.7															
Altria	61.11	+1.48	2.3	MorgStan	25.88	+0.71	2.2															
AMOVIL	14.14	+0.62	0.5	NewellRub	38.78	+1.27	0.6															
Anadarko	39.09	+1.84	1.1	NextEraEn	111.71	+3.41	0.8															
Apache	42.54	+1.94	1.0	NipponTT	42.76	+1.19	3.1															
ApldMatl	17.65	+0.97	0.4	NokiaCp	7.20	+0.10	0.8															
Apple	97.34	+3.25	2.1	NorthropG	185.06	+4.91	0.2															
AT&T Inc	36.06	+0.53		OneokPrs	27.34	+0.74	3.2															
Autodesk	46.82	+1.55	1.9	Oracle	36.31	+0.98	3.2															
AvidTech	7.10	+0.25	0.0	Orange	17.67	+0.27	0.6															
BcoSanSA	4.19	+0.07		Penn Gmng	14.13	+0.28	0.7															
BestBuy	27.93	+0.96	0.3	Penney	7.26	+0.44																
BkNYMel	36.22	+0.85	0.9	PepcoHold	26.68	+0.06	0.0															
BkoAm	14.14	+0.61	0.7	PepsiCo	98.30	+1.85	1.1															
Bking	120.13	+2.12	0.2	Pfizer	30.48	+0.29	2.8															
BP PLC	32.37	+0.48	4.4	PhilipMor	90.01	+0.95	1.2															
BrlfIdAs	29.96	+0.30	2.4	PPL	35.06	+0.74	4.1															
BrlMySq	62.16	+1.00	0.5	Praxair	100.00	+1.80	1.5															
Caterpillar	62.24	+1.16	1.5	ProctGam	81.89	+1.87	2.9															
CBS B	47.50	+1.21	3.1	Prudent	39.34	+1.15	2.7															
CenterPnt	18.87	+0.33	0.6	QstDiag	65.67	+1.52	1.2															
Chevron	86.47	+0.55	1.0	Rayonier	21.09	+1.72	1.6															
Citigroup	42.58	+2.19	4.3	Raytheon	128.24	+0.66	1.0															
CocaCola	42.92	+0.35	0.2	ReynAmer	48.95	+1.41	2.7															
Corning	18.61	+0.62	1.3	RylCarb	81.96	+3.63	1.4															
Deere	77.01	+2.20		Schwab	25.53	+0.71	1.5															
Disney	95.82	+2.29		SearsHdgs	16.95	-0.45	0.2															
DowChem	42.00	+0.45	1.4	Sherwin	25.67	+6.01	0.0															
DukeEng	75.30	+1.83	0.8	SiderurNac	0.77	-0.06	2.7															
DuPont	33.17	+0.63	3.3	Siemens	95.00	...	0.1															
ExxonMbl	77.85	+0.86	1.9	SonyCp	23.88	+3.59	3.8															
Facebook	112.21	+3.10	2.9	Starbucks	67.77	+1.49	0.1															
FedExCp	132.88	+4.66		SwstAir	37.62	+1.43	0.8															
FidInFin	32.38	+0.73	1.0	Symantec	18.84	+0.34	3.0															
FidNatInfo	5.73	+1.52	0.8	Target	74.22	+1.43	0.6															
FrontierCm	4.55	+0.04	1.0	Textron	34.22	+0.63	2.2															
GenElec	29.10	+0.89	0.4	TimeWarn	182.01	+3.53	0.1															
GlaxoSKin	41.29	+0.65	0.9	Toyota	120.03	+3.91	3.0															
GoldmanS	161.56	+4.50	2.4	Travelers	107.04	+2.57	3.6															
Google	742.95	+11.99	2.9	UPS B	93.20	+2.20																
Hershey	88.11	+1.11		ValeroC	67.87	+3.33	2.9															
HewlettP	9.71	+0.23	2.3	Vodafone	32.20	+0.95	2.4															
Hitachi	48.53	...	0.5	WalterEn	0.04	...	2.3															
HomeDep	125.76	+3.48	1.0	Waste Mngt	52.95	+0.88	1.7															
Honda	27.02	-0.33	2.4	WellsFargo	50.22	+1.31	0.0															
IBM	124.79	+2.57		Yahoo	29.51	+0.76	1.6															
Intel	31.02	+0.05	5.2	Zimmer	99.26	+1.71	1.5															

Commodities				
Energy	Units	Date	Close	Chg
Crude oil NYM	\$/Barrel	Mar	33.62	+0.40
Natural gas NYM	Mil. BTU	Mar	2.30	+0.12
Heating oil NYM	Gallon	Feb	1.06	+0.02
Gasoline NYM	Gallon	Feb	1.10	+0.02
Metals				
Gold CMX	\$/1oz.	Feb	1116.40	+0.80
Silver CMX	\$/1oz.	Feb	14.23	+0.01
HG Copper CMX	\$/lb.	Feb	2.06	+0.02
Platinum NYM	\$/1oz.	Mar	873.60	+6.40
Agricultural				
Soybean CBT	e/5000 BSL	Mar	882.25	+14.50
Corn CBT	e/5000 BSL	Mar	372.00	+6.50
Wheat CBT	e/5000 BSL	Mar	479.25	+7.00
Live cattle CME	e/4000 Lbs	Feb	135.30	-0.13

Treasuries						
	Yield	Chg.	Yr.Chg	Wk	Mo	Qtr
3-month T-bill	0.31	-0.02	0.01	▲	▲	▲
6-month T-bill	0.43	-0.01	0.06	▲	▲	▲
52-wk T-bill	0.44	0.00	0.14	▼	▼	▲
2-year T-note	0.78	-0.05	0.52	▼	▼	▲
5-year T-note	1.33	-0.07	1.27	▼	▼	▼
10-year T-note	1.92	-0.06	1.76	▼	▼	▼
30-year T-bond	2.75	-0.04	2.32	▼	▼	▼

Global Markets				
	Close	Chg	%Chg	%Yr
FTSE 100	6083.79	+152.01	+2.56	-10.67
CAC 40	4417.02	+94.86	+2.19	-4.63
Nikkei 225	17518.30	+476.85	+2.80	-0.50
Hang Seng	19683.11	+487.28	+2.54	-19.97
SET	1300.98	+12.58	+0.98	-17.99
All Ord	5056.60	+28.53	+0.57	-8.60
DAX	9798.11	+158.52	+1.64	-8.75

Most Active				
	Close	Chg	YTD%	Volume
Bank of Ameri (BAC)	14.14	+0.61	+4.5	1592798
Citizens Fncl (CFG)	21.25	-0.49	-2.3	948742