

## ENVIRONMENT

# City aims to be greenest in Missouri

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**- Leon Daggett,**  
**Independence Power and Light director**

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Independence Power and Light Director Leon Daggett said his goal is to be one of the greenest cities in the state. He already feels the city is the greenest in the Kansas City area.

He's taken another step in that direction when he put out bids for the construction of a solar farm, which was won by MC Power of Lee's Summit. It will be a 3.3 megawatt facility atop the Space Center caves off of Salisbury Road.

"We've been working on the solar farm for about two years now," Daggett said. "The reason we were interested in seeing what kind of appetite there was for solar in our town. We think the best way to develop solar is to develop it as a utility-grade solar."

"I'm not a big fan yet of individual solar on home and roof because what people want is some kind of subsidy to

install it.

"There are some people who will never put solar on their house and the way our system works we have one place to get revenue is our ratepayers, so if someone puts solar on their roof and they get a subsidy, they are getting subsidized by who I call Mrs. Smith, who's living on Social Security, who lives in a small house and doesn't install solar."

"My job, as a director, is to make sure Mrs. Smith is represented in this whole thing. She shouldn't subsidize other ratepayers. That's why I don't like rooftop solar. So I thought, 'How do we give our citizens the ability to participate in solar. So we came up with the idea of a solar farm.'"

So far he said he has talked to a little less than a dozen people who said they would be interested into investing into the solar farm. He said IPL is looking for customers to buy a part of the facility and the portion they buy is called



**An artist's rendering of the city's utilities customer service center seen from the southeast. It will occupy the former physicians building at the Medical Center of Independence. | Image submitted**

energy credits.

"They purchase these through this community solar farm," Daggett said, "and they do this because their desire is to go green."

In order to begin construction on the solar farm, 25 percent of the 3.3 megawatts generated have to be subscribed to customers. The paperwork for building the new facility was just completed Jan. 19 and IPL will begin searching for interested parties.

"Say we sell 75 percent, then we can build it bigger," Dag-

gett said. "We are just now starting the marketing effort to get to 25 percent. We are putting out some fliers about it. By subscribing, they get the renewable energy credits and they have a value. We don't know what that is yet."

The cost for the renewable credits for the solar farm is 8.2 cents per kilowatt hour as compared to 3 cents for wind power and natural gas system is in the 2 cent range, Daggett said.

"You are going to pay more if you buy in," he said. "The

number could flip if five years from now or six years from now everyone else is above the 8.2, you are locked into the 8.2. As long as the solar farm exists, you are locked in. This rate stays the same, the other stuff goes up. Eighty percent of Missouri's energy is from coal. But they are phasing out coal. So what does that do to the price? It goes up."

Daggett said he hopes to start the construction of the solar farm in the summer and hopes it's complete some time in October or November.