

AMEA-Sylacauga Utilities Board Solar Research Project

The Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) is working with the Sylacauga Utilities Board, your public power utility, on a joint venture to construct a 50-kilowatt solar power project in Sylacauga, Alabama. The AMEA-Sylacauga Utilities Board Solar Research Project will be located at 304 W. Highland Avenue in Sylacauga. AMEA is also working with its other Member cities/utilities, including Alexander City, Dothan, Fairhope, LaFayette, Lanett, Luverne, Opelika, Piedmont, Riviera Utilities and Tuskegee, to construct similar solar research projects in each of these communities. The total cost of the projects is approximately \$1 million.

Project Specifications

- ☀️ **Size:** 160 solar panels on approximately 0.73 acres of land
Output: 50 kilowatts (kW)
- ☀️ **Racking:** Fixed-axis system facing the south to optimize the capacity capabilities and energy production
- ☀️ **About AMEA:** AMEA, a joint action agency formed in 1981, is the wholesale power provider for 11 public power utilities in Alabama, which serve approximately 350,000 customers. AMEA's mission is to provide for our Member communities a reliable and economical source of electric power, enabling them to preserve and enhance the benefits of municipal utility ownership for their citizens and the electric customers they serve. We strive to offer services that our Members need and can adapt to provide the best value for their communities and customers.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who owns the solar project?

A: The solar project is owned by the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA). AMEA is a not-for-profit agency providing wholesale electric power to 11 Member municipal utilities in Alabama. As a Member of AMEA, the Sylacauga Utilities Board holds a seat on the AMEA Board of Directors and has input into all decisions made by AMEA. In this way, the Sylacauga Utilities Board owns a portion of the solar project. The cost of the construction and maintenance of the property will be paid for by AMEA.

Q. Will my home power be connected to the solar research project?

A. The output from the AMEA-Sylacauga Utilities Board Solar Research Project will be placed on the local electric distribution system (“The Distribution Grid”) and becomes part of all electric generation that is attached to the system. As electricity from the solar panels will join with electricity generated by other facilities on the distribution system, it is impossible to tell if the electricity generated by the solar project is specifically powering any particular home or building.

Q. Will having the solar research project located here in the Sylacauga Utilities Board service area lower my electric bill?

A: The AMEA-Sylacauga Utilities Board Solar Research Project will have very little impact on your electric bill. AMEA is dedicated to providing low cost, reliable and environmentally responsible power to its member communities. Electricity from renewable energy sources such as solar and wind is intermittent, meaning its output is not present around the clock. While becoming more competitive cost-wise, renewable energy sources must be part of a power supply portfolio anchored with traditional resources. The construction of this solar project, and the other solar projects planned in AMEA communities, is meant as a fact-finding effort to better understand all aspects of solar generation. AMEA’s solar projects will be blended with its other resources, and through this initiative and others, AMEA will strive to keep its electric rates among the lowest in Alabama.

Q: Does the solar project have security?

A: Yes, the solar project will have basic security measures in place. The project itself does not require someone to be there to operate, but AMEA authorized representatives will visit and conduct regular maintenance.

Q: Is there any danger having the solar project in our community?

A: A solar project is about as safe as a facility can be. There are no air emissions from the facility. There are no chemicals. No trucks will be coming and going on a daily basis once construction is complete. The power will leave the solar project on lines just like the power lines in your neighborhood.

Q: What about glare?

A: Glare is produced by reflected sunlight. The more sunlight a solar panel absorbs, the more electricity it can produce. Solar panels are designed to absorb light, and only reflect a small amount of the sunlight that hits them as compared to most other everyday objects. For example, solar panels reflect significantly less light than flat water.