

**From:** [Joyce Whittier](#)  
**To:** [Leipzig, Jay, PLN](#); [PLN-Planner on Duty](#)  
**Subject:** KC Business Journal Article  
**Date:** Thursday, May 5, 2022 4:11:39 PM  
**Attachments:** [NextEra plans massive solar project for Johnson County - 09-11-20.docx](#)

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Jay,

Please add the attached to the packet given to the Planning Commission at the next meeting. I believe this is the 30 year project to which you were referring in December of 2020. The article is dated three months before any mention of it was made in the minutes.

Joyce

<https://www.bizjournals.com/kansascity/news/2020/09/11/nextera-plans-500-mw-solar-project-in-kc-area.html>

## NextEra plans massive solar project for Johnson County



[Enlarge](#)

NextEra Energy Resources LLC is planning a 500 MW solar project in southwest Johnson County.  
COURTESY THINKSTOCK

### IN THIS ARTICLE

- [NextEra Energy](#) Company
- [Eversource Energy](#) Company
- [Jim Robo](#) Person



By [Brian Kaberline](#) – Editor, Kansas City Business Journal

Sep 11, 2020

A Florida-based energy company plans to develop a \$450 million solar project in southwest Johnson County.

NextEra Energy Resources LLC's West Gardner Solar Project is to include a 500-megawatt solar farm, along with 500 megawatts of battery storage, [according to a company website](#). The company gives only a general location for the project, but says it will take in 3,500 acres.

The project would be significant because it would be NextEra's first solar project in Kansas and due to the addition of energy storage capability.

NextEra Energy Resources, a unit of NextEra Energy Inc., claims to be the world's largest generator of renewable energy from wind and solar sources. The company [listed 3,427 gross megawatts of solar in its portfolio](#) as of June 30. Of the projects listed, the largest is the 550 MW Desert Sunlight project in Riverside County, Calif.

NextEra Energy Resources' portfolio also includes the Cedar Bluff, Cimarron, Ensign, Gray County, Kingman, Ninnescah and Pratt wind projects in Kansas, with a total generating capacity of 1,132 MW.

The West Gardner project appears to be in the early stages, with a project website telling area landowners in or near the project area that "you may be able to host solar panels or equipment on your land and enhance your income, potentially for years to come." It also seeks information from Johnson County residents who might be willing to write letters of support to local and state officials.

The facility probably also is looking for prospective customers. Such facilities cannot operate as retail utilities, but can sell power by contract to utilities and large wholesale customers like data center operators.

The inclusion of energy storage helps negate what has been billed as a shortcoming of solar projects — that they only work when the sun is out. Storage systems can be used to provide power when it is needed and to balance load on the electrical grid.

NextEra has made a big commitment to energy storage. In April, CEO [Jim Robo](#) said the company expects to invest more than \$1 billion in storage in 2021, which he said would be the largest annual battery storage investment by a power company in history.

Solar and wind power long have been popular with green-minded consumers and benefitted from tax incentives. But project increasingly are becoming popular and feasible due to significant declines in costs.

More than half of the renewable capacity added last year [had lower power costs than the cheapest new coal plants](#), according to a report by the International Renewable Energy Agency. Electricity costs from utility-scale solar declined 13% last year, while the cost of wind dropped 9%.

Energy Inc., which serves most of the Kansas City metro area and roughly 1.6 million customers in Missouri and Kansas, introduced a new strategic plan last month that calls for accelerating its switch from coal-fired plants to renewable energy sources. The utility had [3,714 MW of capacity from renewable sources](#), according to its most recent annual report. Of that, most was from wind power, and more than 84% of Evergy's renewable energy capacity came through power purchases.

The challenges for utilities like Evergy are that they still need to pay off investments in coal-fired plants and invest in new renewable generation without causing losses to shareholders or huge rate hikes for customers.

## RELATED CONTENT

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**Evergy subsidiary collects deal to develop new solar energy project**



**Fast 50: Two KC-area solar companies collect sky-high growth**



**Energy, activist shareholder roll out new strategic plan, avert a sale**

**From:** [Jane Knoche](#)  
**To:** [PLN-Planner on Duty](#); [Jay Liepzig](#); [Pendley, Sean, PLN](#)  
**Subject:** Solar Power - the best neighbor ever  
**Date:** Friday, May 6, 2022 4:23:37 PM  
**Attachments:** [Solar Power the best neighbor ever.jpg](#)

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Dear Commissioners and Planning staff,

I am a part owner in the Knoche properties located in both Douglas and Johnson County that are under a lease option with NextEra for a solar farm development. Please find attached a Kansas City Star advertisement from the Kansas Power Alliance. I believe its perspective and observations apply also to your upcoming Planning Commission decisions.

With all the documentation and mitigation requirements in the proposed regulations, I see very little impact to neighbors outside of the traffic during the construction period.

All the Best  
Jane Knoche  
23535 W 74th Street  
Shawnee, KS 66227



**Johnson County is the fastest growing county in Kansas and citizens are vocal about development in the region.**

County leaders are commended for their commitment to "smart growth" community planning in order to maintain the vitality and distinctiveness of the JOCO region.

With more economic growth in JOCO, leaders are challenged by melding new opportunity and the potential for rapid increases in population, new service needs and traffic congestion.

**A quiet, not-visible solar farm is the best neighbor.**

**Want solar power as your neighbor?**

The Johnson County Planning Commission suggested regulations to discourage solar power investment in JOCO. The Board of Commissioners will consider these anti-development rules at its meeting on April 4, 2022.

**Share your Support:**

Sign up to speak at the meeting or call your JOCO County Commissioner at 913-715-0430 and tell them you want Solar Power to save the land near you.

A solar energy development provides HIGH VALUE to the community, but has very LOW IMPACT on its neighbors. Solar is predictable and stable offering:

- *No new traffic to clog already busy streets*
- *No noise to keep you awake or disturb your family*
- *No trash or emissions blowing into your backyard*
- *No crush of new students overwhelming local schools*
- *No strangers living behind you, watching you from across the fence*
- *No strange smells, loud noise, or raucous behavior to disturb your neighborhood*
- *No surprise strip malls or other disruptive development right beside you*
- *No unexpected, new, or expanding freeways to handle rush hour traffic*

Just clean, cheap, JOCO-made energy for you and your neighbors.

*A field of solar power preserves the land for decades making sure your investment in your home retains its value with no surprises.*



**Learn More:**

[PowerAlliance.org/Kansas/](https://PowerAlliance.org/Kansas/) or follow us @KSPowerAlliance