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RIVER VALLEY > Posted November 16, 2020 | Updated November 16, 2020

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New Rumford solar project breaks ground, will start providing power in April 2021

The Rumford Planning Board has approved three solar farms so far in Rumford, and a fourth one could possibly be ready for approval in 2021, according to Code Enforcement Officer Richard Coulombe.

BY **BRUCE FARRIN** RUMFORD FALLS TIMES





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Attending a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 10 for Energy Management Inc.'s new solar project in the Rumford Industrial Park are, from left, Economic Development Director George O'Keefe, Rumford Selectman Frank DiConzo, Chamber of Commerce Administrator Cheryl Dickson, EMI President Jim Gordon and Chamber First Vice President Patti Daigle. The solar project is expected to be complete and enter commercial operation at the end of April 2021. *Bruce Farrin/Rumford Falls Times*

RUMFORD — Construction on a distributed generation solar photovoltaic project by Energy Management Inc. in the industrial park is expected to be complete and enter commercial operation at the end of April 2021.

At a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 10, EMI President Jim Gordon recalled fondly the experience of working with the town of Rumford when they purchased a large parcel of land in the park and developed the gas-fired Rumford Power plant 20-plus years ago.

EMI sold the plant and the parcel the plant sits on, but retained 72 acres, with the Rumford Park Solar to be built over 20 acres.

Rumford Park Solar is a 3.96MW-DC solar facility consisting of 9,900 solar panels. The system will produce about 5,130,000 kilowatt hours annually, which is the energy consumption equivalent of 777 homes. The project will provide employment for about 50 craftspeople and operators during the construction period, which began Aug. 20.

This is one of two distributed generation solar



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program as community solar projects.

According to Zac Gordon, director of project development, the two projects will provide electricity to the Central Maine Power electric distribution system and meaningfully contribute to the State of Maine's energy and climate goals.

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“People in the community, if they want to sign up, they get a guaranteed 10% discount, and they get cleaner energy,” Jim Gordon said.

Subscribers receive guaranteed savings on their utility bill for the clean energy that their portion of the project produces and supplies to the utility grid. Subscribers are then billed for their portion of the project but at a discount for supporting clean energy — saving them money every month.

The construction is being done by CS Energy, an integrated energy company that designs and builds optimized projects in the solar, storage and emerging energy industries.

“Hopefully, this is the first of two (solar projects),” Gordon said. “The second one is behind the public works garage on Route 2. We've got a lot going on in town.



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project, EMI could potentially break ground on the second project in Rumford by the end of 2021.

Code Enforcement Officer Richard Coulombe said the Rumford Planning Board has approved three solar farms so far in Rumford.

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The first one approved is on the Gammon property on Mountain View Annex Road, behind the radio tower, which is being built by Nexamp.

The second farm is the one that EMI is building on Industrial Park Road.

The third one is off of Wyman Hill Road across from Roger White's house on Nicols Brothers Inc. property, which will be built by Next Phase Energy Services.

“The fourth one, behind the public works, will go before the planning board I believe some time next year for approval,” said Coulombe.

Economic Development Director George O'Keefe said the solar ordinance put in place by townspeople in July “has greatly supported the ability of solar farm operators to confidently move forward with projects whose ultimate value is measured in the millions of dollars.”



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have the opportunity to showcase the fact that we're continuing to try to diversify our economy here and provide new value in the town.”



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