

Oct. 11, 2007

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Santee Cooper Wind Energy Research Continues

Santee Cooper, the Belle W. Baruch Foundation and the Clemson University Restoration Institute have come together to study whether coastal Georgetown County's winds are strong enough to fuel commercially viable electricity, the partners announced today in Myrtle Beach. This will be the third wind research project involving Santee Cooper and Clemson University, who also have projects ongoing with Coastal Carolina University in Horry County and North Charleston.

Wind power is virtually emissions-free renewable energy. Although previous research has indicated commercial-scale winds exist along the coast and in some mountainous areas of the state, development of large-scale wind power still hinges on research, public outreach and acceptance. Demonstration projects that measure and document wind speeds, like this new proposal for the Hobcaw Barony property in Georgetown, will highlight the benefits and limitations of wind power.

Plans call for installation of a 50-meter anemometer station with gauges to measure wind speeds at 30-, 40- and 50-meter heights. All data collected from these instruments will be sent remotely to Clemson computers and be made available to researchers through the Internet. After a year, the data and any environmental impacts will be analyzed with an eye towards construction of a wind turbine at the property.

"Santee Cooper is very encouraged by initial results of our ongoing wind research with Clemson and Coastal Carolina University. We are eager to fully explore the possibilities associated with this vital and renewable source of energy," said R.M. Singletary, senior vice president of corporate services at the state-owned utility. "Santee Cooper is the state's leader in producing renewable energy. We began producing Green Power with electricity generated from landfill gas, right here in Horry County, in 2001. We now produce solar power as well, and we fully expect that these wind projects will add another fuel source to our mix."

Clemson, Coastal Carolina and Santee Cooper announced the first wind research project last spring and installed an anemometer tower on Waties Island in Horry County over the summer. Preliminary findings at Waties support the concept of a turbine installation, and various sizes and types will be assessed for power production as the data are collected and analyzed.

A second anemometer has been installed, at Clemson's Restoration Institute in North Charleston, and that data are being analyzed for possible turbine placement as well. Nick Rigas, director of renewable

energy programs for the Restoration Institute, is leading the wind research. Santee Cooper would operate the turbines.

“Our studies at Clemson University will now include Georgetown County, allowing us to characterize the wind potential along the coast of South Carolina from Charleston to the North Carolina Border,” said Dr. Nicholas Rigas, director of renewable energy programs at Clemson’s Restoration Institute. “I commend the Belle W. Baruch Foundation for being so supportive and forward-thinking to allow the study of this potentially important renewable energy resource. Through studies like these we will work with Santee Cooper to generate interest in students and the public on the benefits of wind power along the South Carolina coast and offshore. Only through research can we understand the benefits of wind power and how to develop it in an environmentally sustainable manner with minimal impact to our coast’s ecosystems.”

Santee Cooper is committed to expanding the amount of electricity it produces from renewable sources. Renewable energy will be a key component in the utility’s plan to meet increasing energy demands in the coming years, along with additional baseload generation and an expanded menu of conservation and energy-efficiency programs.

Santee Cooper is South Carolina's state-owned electric and water utility and serves more than 160,000 residential and commercial customers in Berkeley, Georgetown and Horry counties. The utility also generates the power distributed by the state's 20 electric cooperatives to more than 685,000 customers in all 46 counties. Nearly 2 million South Carolinians receive their power directly or indirectly from Santee Cooper. For more information, visit www.santeecooper.com