



News Release

For Immediate Release May 11, 2010

Contact Person: Kurt Brautigam

Phone: 601.261.2348 or 228.861.0508 (cell)

Email: kbrautigam@smepa.coop

Website: www.smepa.coop

South Mississippi Electric Receives \$30 Million Smart Grid Grant

South Mississippi Electric Power Association (SME) was recently notified by the Department of Energy (DOE) that the organization has received formal approval for a federal smart grid investment grant. The grant totals \$30,563,967.

South Mississippi Electric is a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative headquartered in Hattiesburg that provides wholesale power for 11 Member-owner distribution cooperatives. Last October, DOE announced that a project proposal jointly submitted by SME and five of its Members was one of 100 selectees from around the country for the stimulus grants, which were funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The \$61 million project application, "Advanced Metering Infrastructure and Associated Smart Grid Investments for Rural Mississippi," was submitted in August 2009. The DOE grant program requires a fifty percent match for all funds awarded.

The collaborative project calls for installing nearly 241,000 retail smart meters and 229 wholesale meters that will upgrade the metering process across SME's transmission system. The new retail meters will also help provide consumers with valuable information regarding their electricity usage. Member cooperatives participating in the project include Coast EPA (headquartered in Kiln), Magnolia EPA (McComb), Southern Pine EPA (Taylorsville), Southwest Mississippi EPA (Lorman), and Pearl River Valley EPA (Columbia).

– more –

“Smart meters are the basic building blocks of a smart grid,” said Kurt Brautigam, SME spokesman. “Smart meters have the ability to develop, store, send and receive digital information concerning electricity use and the time of that use. Those capabilities will allow for a variety of consumer-related possibilities, including real-time metering that reflects the true cost of producing electricity throughout the day, and demand response programs that can actually be used to reduce consumer demand levels.

“When people talk about a smart grid, they are essentially talking about communication from the generating facility to beyond the consumer’s meter, with multiple points of control and monitoring in-between. This project will help to build the foundation for that communication by providing a network capable of handling high volumes of data.”

To supplement the project’s main scope of work, which calls for installing automated meter infrastructure and meters at the consumer level, several of the participating Member systems will also be installing communication, control and data management equipment to improve the capability of their delivery systems. South Mississippi Electric’s portion of the project is slightly more than \$1 million, and work has already begun on replacing and upgrading meters at some transmission delivery points. All aspects of the project are to be completed by October, 2012.

“The DOE grant will allow South Mississippi Electric and its participating Members to complete this project more quickly and at a reduced cost to consumers,” Brautigam added. “Such collaborative efforts are the foundation of what we do as cooperative, not-for profit organizations. It will provide an excellent benefit for all of our Members and for their member-consumers.”

South Mississippi Electric and its Member-owner electric power associations deliver reliable, not-for-profit electric service to more than 405,000 homes and businesses in 56 of Mississippi’s 82 counties.

#