

Humboldt

Blue Lake Rancheria tribe unveils new micro-grid

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Blue Lake Rancheria tribe unveils new micro-grid

BLUE LAKE, Calif. - The Blue Lake Rancheria will now have a chance to become energy independent. The tribe revealed their low carbon micro-grid Monday. The \$6.6 million project includes a solar array and a biomass power system.

The tribe partnered with Humboldt State University and various other business partners in order to construct the micro-grid. The hope is to eventually have the reservation's energy needs be entirely met by the micro-grid.

A solar array will be put in place with various solar panels to capture sunlight. The biomass power system will be able to convert wood waste such as sawdust and burn it into a renewable source of electricity.

One of the major motivations for creating the micro-grid was to make the reservation ready in case of an emergency. The project manager said that it could allow the tribe to function without the help of the main power grid.

"So with those resources, the Rancheria would be able to operate independent of the larger utility grid pretty much indefinitely in case of a natural disaster," Dave Carter, a research engineer with HSU said. "And provide services and shelter to tribal members and community members at large during for example a large earthquake."

The tribe said that it will help keep energy costs down while protecting the environment.

"We would have lower energy bills and sustainable energy for a very long time," Arla Ramsey, vice chairperson for the Blue Lake Rancheria tribe said. "Plus, clean air and a clean environment, for our children and grandchildren."

HSU and the tribe hope to inspire similar projects along the North Coast.

"If we can do this, other communities can do it too," Ramsey said. "And we're hoping to set an example and help other communities so they don't have to re-invent the wheel in the process."

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