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# Kauai utility flips the switch on Hawaii's largest solar energy farm

Sep 25, 2014, 3:08pm HST

Kauai Island Utility Cooperative flipped the switch Thursday on its \$40 million, 12-megawatt solar farm on the island's South Shore, the largest of its kind in the state.

The Lihue-based cooperative held a dedication ceremony in Koloa on Thursday for the 70-acre project, which is located on former sugar cane field land lased from Grove Farm Co. and expected to generate 5 percent of the Garden Isle's electricity.

With this solar project, which was built by California-based SolarCity, now online, KIUC is using the sun to meet as much as half of the island's daytime energy demand.

Adding solar to the electricity available from the island's existing hydropower systems enabled KIUC to use renewable resources to produce about 57 percent of the energy consumed on Kauai during the daytime on Aug. 31.

Based on information from other utilities, KIUC's daytime solar penetration is now the highest in Hawaii and is currently one of the highest in the country.

In just four years, KIUC has significantly increased the amount of renewable energy on its grid as it moves toward its goal of using renewable resources to generate 50 percent of Kauai's electricity by 2023.

By the end of this year, renewable resources will generate 30 percent of Kauai's electricity, up from 8 percent in 2010.

"Bringing the Koloa project online is a huge step toward our goal of generating most of our electricity by using cheaper, cleaner renewable resources," said David Bissell, president and CEO of KIUC. "This project brings the financial benefits of solar energy to all of our members, not just the ones who can afford to buy a rooftop solar system."

With the addition of the 12-megawatt Anahola Solar farm in 2015, KIUC expects to have the highest daytime solar penetration of any utility in the U.S.

**Duane Shimogawa**

Reporter

*Pacific Business News*

COURTESY: KIUC

KIUC flipped the switch on its Koloa solar project on Thursday.