



# Parish of Ascension

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

KENNY MATASSA  
Parish President

## **Lamar-Dixon Expo Center Solar Panel Project Generates Electricity Savings**

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GONZALES – With the installation of solar panels and solar-powered lights at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in late 2014, Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa announced parish government is seeing savings of \$15,000 to \$20,000 a month in electricity costs at the facility.

“Ten percent of our annual output for 2015 at Lamar-Dixon was attributed to the solar panels being online,” President Matassa said. “And by committing to reducing pollutants in the air by using solar power, we’ve avoided the release of approximately 308 tons of carbon dioxide per year so far.”

The Lamar-Dixon solar project consists of a 300-plus kilowatt rooftop system located on barns 4, 5 and 6, as well as a solar LED pathway lighting system around the southwest lake. The pathway units gather solar energy during the day, storing it in batteries, and releasing it at night when lighting is required.

Parish officials are seeking to earn federal emission reduction credits (ERCs) by utilizing the solar panel system. ERCs are accessible to industrial companies in the parish that implement projects resulting in emission reductions. ERCs would be purchased from an admissions bank overseen by the state Department of Environmental Quality. Credits are earned when companies reduce their current pollutant levels.

Dr. Mike McDaniel, executive director with Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition, has proposed creating another use with the bank where companies could pay for projects outside of their facilities that allow for lower ozone pollution levels. This would allow the companies to receive credits to expand their facilities or add new facilities.

“The parish is very excited about clean air credits and the potential of providing air quality credits to local industry,” said Ken Dawson, parish chief administrative officer. “We have been in discussions with the Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition and Dr. McDaniel to see how that can be implemented. If this is feasible, it will be a great advantage for parish government and industry in Ascension Parish, and a durable, long-term legacy for future generations.”

#### PICTURE CUTLINES



(From Left) Parish Project Engineer Michael Terry and Chief Administrative Officer Ken Dawson unpack solar panels in July of 2014 at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center.



Solar panels are shown adorning the roofs of barns 4, 5, and 6 at Lamar-Dixon in June of 2015.



Solar LED pathway lights stand as solitary sentries along the water's edge of the southwest lake at Lamar-Dixon. The units gather solar energy during the day, storing it in batteries, and releasing it at night when lighting is required.

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