

A Tale of Two Power Stations

Since announcing its plans to construct Cypress Creek Power Station (CCPS) in either Surry or Sussex County, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) has often used Clover Power Station, located in Halifax County – roughly 130 miles from the proposed CCPS sites, for comparison purposes. The two plants share some similarities when it comes to physical and technical features, as well as their environmental and health impact on neighboring communities. However, the similarities end when the two localities are compared.

Struggles in Clover

Clover Power Station, which is co-owned by ODEC and Dominion Virginia Power, was constructed at a time when the nearby Town of Clover (the facility is actually in Halifax County, not Clover) was in the midst of a downward economic spiral. Struggling with job losses from the decline or demise of the area's tobacco, textile and furniture industries, Clover was fighting to keep small businesses running, schools excelling and residents working. While Clover Power Station provided a significant boost to the local economy, the town needed several economic development projects to correct the course set by the loss of these multiple industries and major employers.

During the construction period the region enjoyed many economic benefits, including nearly 1,400 additional jobs and \$14 million purchased on goods and services. Once construction was completed, 140 full-time employees were hired to operate and maintain Clover Power Station. To further support the community, Clover Power Station presented the Town of Clover with a brand new fire truck and police cruiser plus a playground for Clover's youth. ODEC continues to make annual donations to the Town's volunteer fire department, civic community center, health fair and several other organizations.

In 1995, the Virginia State Parks opened the Staunton River Battlefield State Park near the Clover Power Station. In 1996, ODEC and Dominion Virginia Power together funded the building of the park's visitor center. Together they furnished and installed displays pertaining to the power station and electricity generation as well as donated the deed to the building that came with more than 80 acres of land to the Commonwealth.

Regarding tax benefits, Halifax County continues to receive about \$3 million annually in local taxes from Clover Power Station. However, it is important to note that because Clover Power Station is not located within the actual Town of Clover, the Town did not receive additional revenue from the power station. In fact, in order to gain access to the tax benefits and other county funding, the town unincorporated in 1998. During this time, Halifax County decided to consolidate its school system as a cost-reduction measure which resulted in the closing of Clover Elementary School and other small schools throughout the county.

Why Dendron is Different

If the Dendron site is approved, the majority of the proposed CCPS site will be located within the Town of Dendron and partially in surrounding Surry County. Unlike Clover, this will allow the Town of Dendron to directly reap economic rewards.

Dendron and Clover's economic standings pre-power station cannot be compared. While Dendron may not have the thriving lumber industry it once had in the early 20th century, the Town is economically stable at this time. Through CCPS, the Town will be able to boost revenues and create jobs. In fact, both Surry County and the Town of Dendron will receive millions annually in tax revenues with current projections ranging from \$19 to \$22 million annually. These additional dollars are just what the communities need to improve infrastructure, strengthen the education system and bolster local services.

Environment, Health and Property Impact

On two occasions, the Dendron Town Council members were invited to visit the Clover Power Station to not only get a first-hand view of the facility and the town, but also to speak with Halifax County residents and community leaders about how the plant has impacted their health, environment and property values. Those who attended heard favorable reports from these officials and residents about how ODEC promised to be – and remains – a good neighbor and responsible operator of Clover Power Station.

With health and environmental implications at the forefront of Surry and Sussex residents' concerns, Clover residents volunteered information that Clover Power Station had not posed any negative health or environmental effects on the Clover community or surrounding Halifax County. Finally, Clover and Halifax County residents assured participating council members that property values had not declined – in fact, they had increased – since Clover Power Station opened more than 15 years ago.

As for Clover's decreasing population, the community believes it was due more to the results of its declining area industries and attractive career opportunities elsewhere. With setbacks like the unrelated rerouting of the primary highway, U.S. Route 460, prior to the building of the power plant and continued job losses, Clover and its neighboring communities throughout Southside Virginia have had a difficult time competing to retain residents when greater opportunities are available elsewhere.

Continued Commitment

ODEC remains dedicated to the communities it serves and takes pride knowing it plays a role in their economic vitality. In addition to these commitments, ODEC will continue to make it a priority to keep residents of Surry and Sussex Counties informed about the CCPS project. While local land use approvals have been obtained, there is still a long and rigorous regulatory process ahead before CCPS can generate its first kilowatt.

Throughout the process, ODEC encourages members of the community to contact them with any questions – big or small – at 866-348-9976 or by e-mail at

info@cypresscreekpowerstation.com. For the latest on milestones, news and next steps, be sure to visit www.cypresscreekpowerstation.com.