Community Newsletter: McCracken Solar

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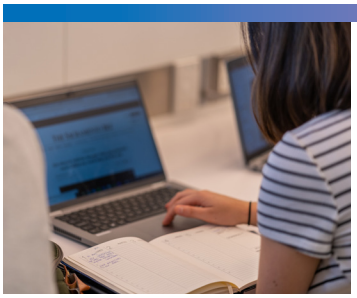
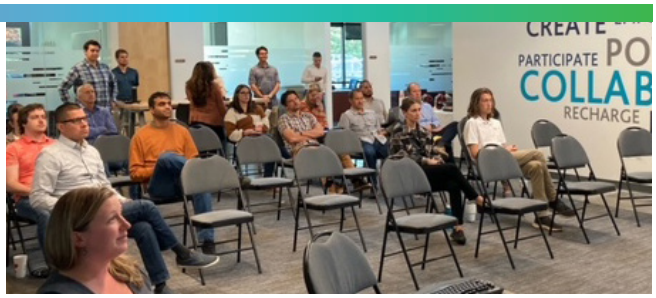
January 2026





Letter From the Field

From planning to building: What comes next?

As the McCracken Solar project continues to move forward, we are asked often about what happens once construction begins and what these early stages look like on the ground. In this issue, we're walking through the key phases of solar construction — starting with mobilization and site preparation — to give you a clear picture of what to expect over the next year.

While construction will not officially start until late 2026, our teams are now focused on the planning and coordination items necessary to ensure official construction runs smoothly. You may hear new terms like "mobilization" or "site prep," and our goal is to explain what they mean, when they happen, and how they help ensure a safe, efficient, and well-managed build.

As always, AES is committed to keeping the community informed every step of the way and minimizing disruption as work progresses. I hope this issue helps you visualize the journey from start to finish — and the care and planning that goes into each phase.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at kystakeholderrelations@aes.com or give our project line a call at 832-776-3040, leave a voicemail, and we will get back to you with information requested. **Our next newsletter will share details about the Pre-Construction Open House planned for early 2026, where you'll have an opportunity to meet the construction team and learn more about the schedule and what to expect once equipment arrives on site.**

Katie Haarsager
Stakeholder Relations Manager for the McCracken Solar project
AES

At a Glance

Project quick facts and status

- Project Name: McCracken Solar
- Location: McCracken County, KY
- Size: 60 megawatts
- Status: Pre-construction Phase (County permit received)
- Total acres of project footprint: ~420 acres

Estimated timeline of activities

- Geotechnical Studies (July-Aug) - complete
- EPC Selection (Winter 2025)
- Pre-Construction Open House (Summer 2026)
- Site Mobilization (Fall 2026)
- Commercial Operation Date – Spring 2028

We'll share a full activity calendar once finalized!

Community impacts

- Traffic: Traffic around site should be minimal/very light right now
- Noise: No work is happening on site through 2025 with noise impacts

We are committed to minimizing disruptions to daily life and aim to provide as much advance notice as possible before any major activity begins. Please watch this newsletter for more information on upcoming potential traffic impacts, noise notifications, or other updates on our work.

Questions or feedback about activity on site?

Contact us at kystakeholderrelations@aes.com

Construction update

What are the phases of construction of a solar facility?

1. Mobilize & site preparation

- Mobilization: Equipment, personnel, and materials are brought to the site, including heavy machinery and temporary facilities.
- Land Clearing: Vegetation and obstacles are removed to make way for the installation of solar infrastructure.
- Survey & Staking: The site is surveyed, and key points are staked to mark boundaries, access roads, and placement of solar arrays.
- Erosion Control: Temporary measures, such as silt fences or drainage systems, are installed to prevent soil erosion during construction.

2. Civil works

- Grading & Excavation: The land is leveled, and trenches are dug for cabling and foundations.
- Access Roads: Roads are constructed to ensure that equipment and vehicles can move easily across the site.
- Drainage Systems: Infrastructure is put in place to manage water flow and prevent flooding or erosion on the site.
- Foundation Installation: Foundations are laid, either in the form of concrete pads or driven piles, for supporting solar panel racks.

3. Racking/mechanical install

- Racking Assembly: The metal frames that hold the solar panels are assembled and installed on the pre-built foundations or piles.
- Alignment: Racking systems are aligned for optimal sun exposure, often using GPS-guided tools.
- Mounting Hardware: Components like brackets and fasteners are secured to the racking system to hold the solar panels in place.
- Structural Inspections: Inspections ensure that the racking systems meet safety and design specifications before panels are installed.

4. Electrical system install

- Panel Installation: Solar panels are mounted on the racking system and secured with brackets.
- DC Wiring: Panels are wired in series or parallel to form arrays, which are connected to DC combiner boxes.
- Inverter Setup: Inverters, which convert DC power from the panels to AC power, are installed at designated locations.
- Cabling & Trenching: Trenches are dug for electrical conduits, and cables are laid to connect solar arrays to the inverters and then to the substation.

5. Substation & interconnection

- Substation Construction: A substation is built or upgraded on-site to manage voltage changes and connect the solar farm to the grid.
- Transformer Installation: Transformers are installed to step up or step down the voltage as needed for grid compatibility.
- Interconnection to Grid: The solar farm is connected to the local electrical grid, involving collaboration with utility companies for safe integration.
- Testing & Inspection: The interconnection system undergoes rigorous testing to ensure that it complies with safety standards and grid requirements.

6. Restoration & commissioning

- Site Restoration: Disturbed areas, such as access roads and land around the arrays, are restored with topsoil, vegetation, or gravel to prevent erosion.
- System Testing: Each component of the solar farm, from panels to electrical systems, undergoes commissioning tests to verify proper operation and efficiency.
- Permitting & Approval: Final inspections are conducted by local authorities and utility providers to ensure all regulations are met.
- Commissioning & Handover: Once fully operational, the system is commissioned, and the site is handed over to the operations and maintenance team for ongoing management.

Common questions before construction

Q: Will construction increase traffic or road wear?
A: During mobilization and construction, there will be periods of increased truck traffic, but we work closely with local officials to identify appropriate routes and minimize community impacts.

Q: Will there be noise or dust?
A: Some noise and dust are expected during construction hours, but crews will follow strict working-hour limits and dust control measures to reduce impacts.

Q: What happens to the land after construction?
A: Once construction is complete, vegetation will be re-established around the panels. The site will be maintained with low-impact ground cover, promoting pollinator habitat and long-term soil health.

Q: Who do I contact if I have concerns or questions?
A: Our stakeholder relations team is always available at kystakeholderrelations@aes.com or by phone at 832-776-3040 if you have a concern, comment, or question about work taking place.

Meet the team

The project is being developed and will be owned and operated by AES, a U.S.-based energy company with more than four decades of experience building energy projects that create long-term value and positive impact for local communities, while strengthening US energy security and supporting increasing energy demands. AES is committed to being a good neighbor and working with local contractors, community partners, and neighbors like you throughout the life of the project.

Johanna Kraus Darden
MISO Director of Development

Day-to-day:
Oversees the planning, execution, and delivery of solar energy projects, ensuring they meet technical, financial, and regulatory goals.

Best part of the job or this project:
Learning new things every day on how drive renewable energy to help address the needs of the U.S. economy and mitigate environmental impacts.

Background or Credentials/Education:
University of Colorado graduate with over 10 years of experience in the solar industry from rooftop solar, community solar gardens and utility scale project development.

Hometown:
Texas

Fun Fact or Interest:
Big fan of gardening and tasting new food dishes!

In the spotlight

Community partners

Inspiring the Next Generation at WKY LAUNCH

AES was proud to participate in the Western Kentucky LAUNCH event, where more than 800 local 8th grade students explored career opportunities available in their own communities. Our team joined businesses and organizations from across the region to showcase how energy projects like McCracken Solar help power the future - and the variety of skilled careers that make it possible. From engineering and construction to environmental science and community engagement, students learned that renewable energy offers exciting, hands-on paths to build a brighter, more sustainable Kentucky.

Spread the word

Please share this newsletter with neighbors, local groups, or anyone interested you think may be interested in the project. Want to be added to our list?
Click here or share this link to subscribe for updates:
https://aescorp.quorum.us/campaign/mccrackennews/

Contact us

If you have questions, comments, ideas, or a complaint/grievance related to the project, please reach out. We look forward to keeping you updated!

Email:
KYstakeholderrelations@aes.com

Website:
https://www.aes.com/mccracken-solar

Phone:
832-776-3040