



Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council

Annual Report

2025





Table of Contents

A Letter from our Executive Director	3
Our Leadership in 2025	4
Our Members in 2025	5
Community Choice Aggregation	6
Lifetime Program Savings	7
Green Power Impact	9
Public Pricing Program	10
Community Grants	11
Supporting the Village of Hemlock with Solar	12
Athens SolSmart Platinum & Carbon Fee	13
Grants	14
Russell's as the New SOPEC Office	15
Market Volatility & Future Outlook	16
Thank You	17



Regional Director for Southwest Ohio, Jennifer O'Donnell, pictured tabling at a conference.

Our Mission

Provide simple, valuable, and reliable public energy programs that help our members achieve their local energy and sustainability goals.

Summary

In this annual report, learn about how SOPEC supported its members in their energy and sustainability goals through community funds, community choice aggregation, and grant writing. Discover how SOPEC evolved in 2025 to better adapt to the needs of its members.

support@sopec-oh.gov
614-259-8080
www.sopec-oh.gov

Follow us on social media!





A Letter from our Executive Director

2025 was a year of momentum for the Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council (SOPEC). From programs to staff development to organizational investment, SOPEC took concrete steps to deepen the impact we can offer our members and to position the organization for the work ahead.

Our team expanded with intention this year. We brought on dedicated staff to support the RIDES program, extending our capacity to help members pursue transportation electrification opportunities. A new grants specialist joined to focus specifically on project-level support for SOPEC members working through the implementation side of awarded grants. We also invested in technical literacy across the organization: a significant portion of SOPEC staff earned their Solar PV Level 1 certification, grounding our team more deeply in the technologies shaping the energy landscape we work within every day.

On the program side, members saw collective savings in their electric supply programs compared to the standard service offer. For example, since the City of Cleveland joined SOPEC in 2023, residents and small businesses have saved an estimated \$20.9 million compared to the utility's standard service offer through community choice aggregation (CCA). Cleveland has paired those savings with a commitment to back the program's electric supply with 100% renewable energy, a clear demonstration that cost competitiveness and climate ambition can go hand in hand.

National data underscores the scale of what SOPEC's member communities have built together. According to figures compiled by the National Laboratory of the Rockies (formerly known as NREL), SOPEC ranked 7th in the country for community choice aggregation green power sales and 10th for CCA green power customers. This recognition places SOPEC among the leading programs of its kind anywhere in the nation.

SOPEC's growth trajectory is further illustrated by the purchase of the former Russell's Gas Station at 136 Columbus Road in Athens, Ohio. This property will become SOPEC's new Athens office and will feature an electric vehicle charging hub. This new space reflects both our organizational growth and our commitment to making sustainable energy infrastructure real and accessible in the communities we serve.

We also launched a new SOPEC website this year, giving members and partners a cleaner, more accessible window into our programs and resources.

None of this happens in isolation. Putting SOPEC's mission into practice is successful because our members have chosen to act collectively – pooling demand, sharing expertise, and pursuing a vision of public energy that prioritizes people. We are grateful for that commitment and for your confidence in this organization as we continue building on our vision for a resilient energy future.

Sincerely,
Luke Sulfridge
Executive Director



Our Leadership in 2025

Staff:

Luke Sulfridge

Executive Director

Phil Leppla

Deputy Director & General Counsel

Danielle Kuskowski

Associate General Counsel

Dana Vingris

Director of Grants and Development

Shaunquitta Walker

Director of Finance

Melissa Dalton

Director of Administration

Chloe Musick

Director of Public Affairs and Marketing

Jennifer McMillin

Regional Director for Northeast Ohio

Jessica Arnold

Regional Director for Southeast Ohio

Stephen Harris

Regional Director for Central Ohio &
Director of Government Relations

Jennifer O'Donnell

Regional Director for Southwest Ohio

Mat Roberts

Special Programs Manager

Erin Stevens

Southeast Ohio Community Liaison

Lacey Babnik

Grants Manager

Michael Moses

Grants Manager

Emily Bails

Programs Coordinator

Philip Hewitt

Grants Specialist

Matthew Clark

EV Project Manager and Technical Expert

Eileen Comerford

EV Southwest Project Coordinator

Board:

Steve Patterson

Chair

Matt Joseph

Vice Chair

Gary Goosman

Treasurer

Susan Miller

Secretary

Susan Abdella

Chris Chmiel

Steve Fine

Matthew Jolson

Sarah O'Keeffe

Chris Pion

Joshua Rauch

Aaron Sorrell

Jacolyn Thiel

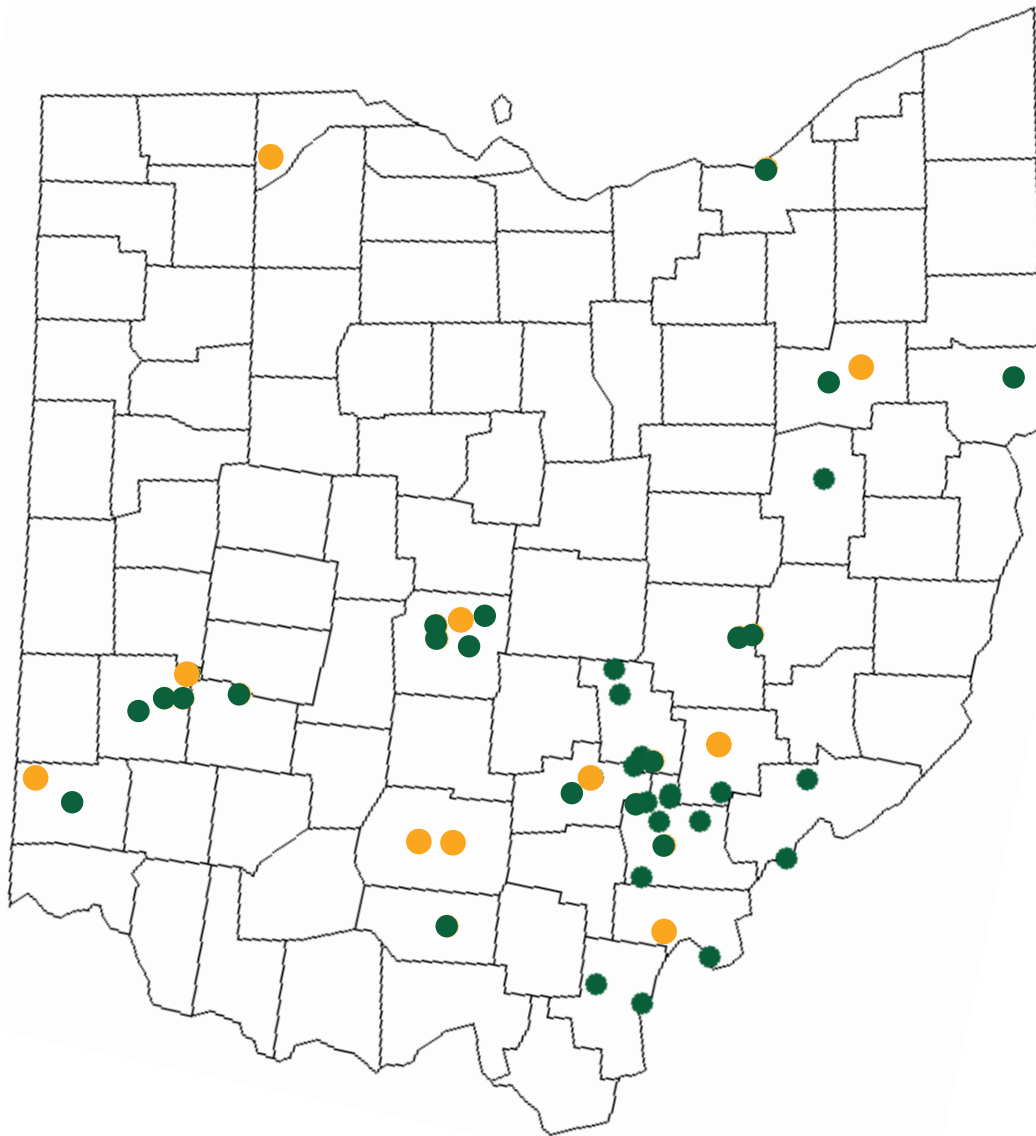
Corey Wybensinger



Mayor Steve Patterson
speaking at Ohio University.



Our Members in 2025



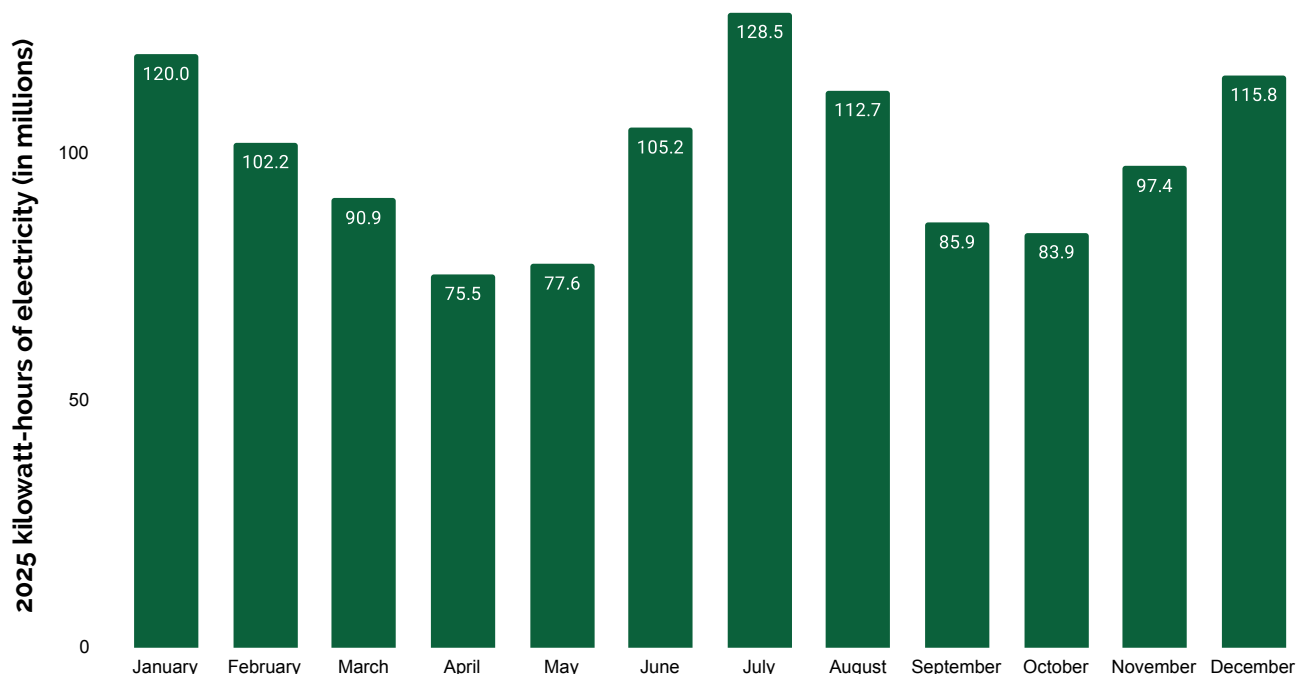
Albany • Amesville • Athens • Athens County • Athens-Hocking Solid Waste District
Belpre • Blendon Township • Buchtel • Chauncey • Chesterhill • **Chillicothe**
Chillicothe and Ross County Public Library • Cleveland • **Clinton Township** • Dayton
Dayton Metro Library • Gahanna • Five Rivers MetroParks • Gallipolis • Glenford • Hemlock
Hocking Conservancy District • **Huber Heights** • Jacksonville • Logan
Logan-Hocking County Public Library • Lowell • Marble Cliff
MetroParks of Butler County • Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District
McConnelsville • New Concord • New Straitsville • Norwich • **Oxford** • Piketon
Racine • Rio Grande • Riverside • **Rutland** • Shawnee • Somerset
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority • **Stark Library**
Syracuse Racine Regional Sewer District • Trimble • Unity Township
Upper Arlington • **Whitehouse** • Yellow Springs

All of the names in orange joined in 2025.



Community Choice Aggregation

Energy Consumption by SOPEC CCA Members in 2025



What is a Green-e[®] Renewable Energy Certificate (REC)?

A REC represents the property rights to the environmental, social, and other non-power attributes of renewable electricity generation. RECs are issued when one megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity is generated and delivered to the electricity grid from a renewable energy resource. Because the physical electricity we receive through the utility grid says nothing of its origin or how it was generated, RECs play an important role in accounting, tracking, and assigning ownership to renewable electricity generation and use. Overall, their use supports sustainable energy and increases grid resiliency through diversification of assets.

1,195,585

Green-e[®] RECs purchased
by SOPEC in 2025

Approximately

1.2

terawatt hours
of electricity supply

\$3.67

million
in estimated combined
savings against the SSO



SOPEC's Electric Aggregation Programs Deliver Over \$40 Million in Combined Savings Since June 2021*

SOPEC's electric aggregation programs have generated over \$40 million in total combined savings for participating members since June 2021, demonstrating that renewable energy can be accessible and affordable.

The savings reflect a comparison between SOPEC's electric supply rates and the standard service offer (SSO) from the local utility in each member's electric certified territory. SOPEC has provided documented measurable savings for its members through its electric aggregation programs, which provide eligible residents and small businesses with competitively priced electric supply backed by 100 percent renewable energy by default.

"SOPEC's aggregation program has been a transformational asset to our community. Not only has it generated more than \$11 million in savings for residents while delivering 100% renewable electricity, but SOPEC's dedicated staff have also been invaluable partners, helping communities navigate complex energy markets and providing critical support in securing and managing grants that advance local sustainability efforts," said Meg Maloney, the City of Dayton's Sustainability Manager.

*These calculated savings include the first two months of 2026, but we were too excited to wait until next year to share the news.

Notable Savings in our Communities

- | | |
|---|--|
|  City of Cleveland \$20,894,158 |  Athens County \$625,022 |
|  City of Dayton \$11,669,319 |  City of Gahanna \$923,563 |
|  City of Upper Arlington \$2,703,641 |  City of Belpre \$175,992 |
|  City of Riverside \$1,979,751 |  City of Gallipolis \$208,833 |



Cleveland, Ohio



Upper Arlington, Ohio



Program Savings Example

Trends can be seen across multiple SOPEC electric aggregation programs, as displayed by graph below, which features the City of Cleveland's rates.

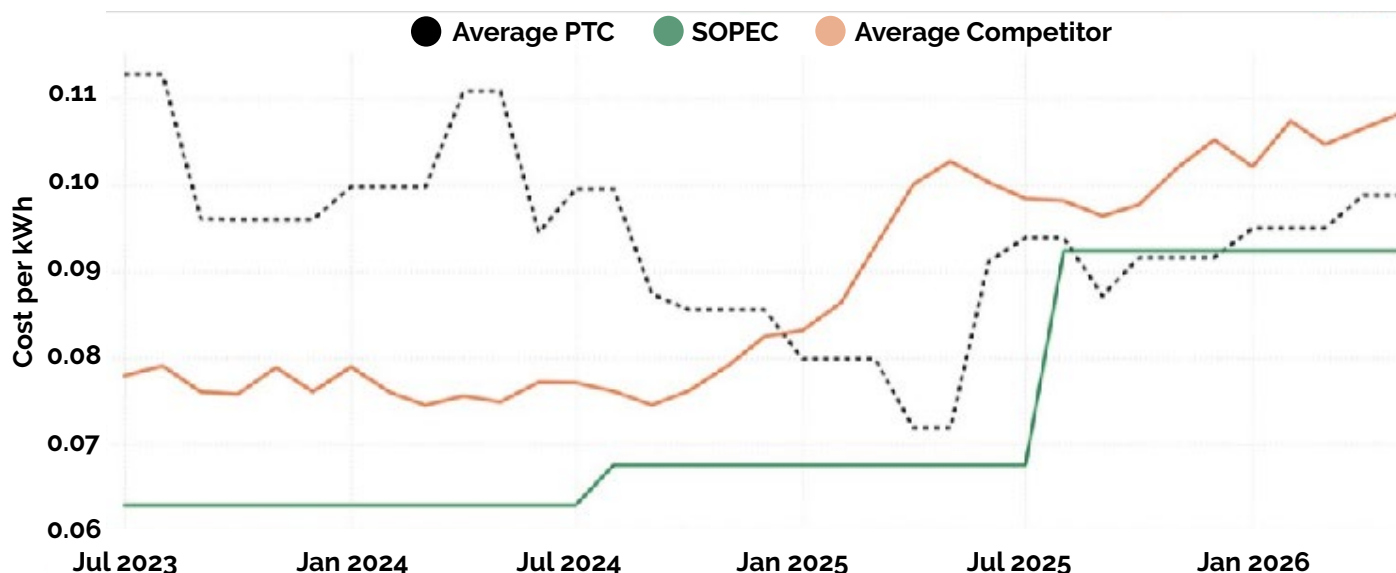
The savings eligible customers in Cleveland experienced through SOPEC's electric aggregation program in 2023 and early 2024 were exceptional; they were the product of timing as much as strategy. During that period, SOPEC had secured a competitive supply rate that resulted in a three to five cents per kilowatt-hour disparity, which translated into meaningful savings for participating households and small businesses.

SOPEC's fixed-term rate model was doing exactly what it is designed to do: insulate customers from market volatility. While the price-to-compare (PTC) swung dramatically over that period, SOPEC participants paid a stable, predictable rate.

SOPEC's current Cleveland fixed-term rate is still green and still below the average competitor rate available on the open market. However, the PTC has also declined and now sits in a similar range. The result is that the savings margin relative to the utility's default rate is narrower today than it was in 2023–2024. This is not a failure of the program. It reflects a normalized energy market.

SOPEC continues to offer a rate that is competitive, transparent, and 100% renewable energy by default, without early termination fees. Customers who remain enrolled are protected from the upward swings competitors are currently experiencing, and they retain the environmental benefit of sustainable electricity at a competitive rate.

SOPEC's Rate in Cleveland vs. Utility's Price to Compare vs. Competitors



Average Competitor: Average of competitor rates posted on Energy Choice Ohio (in \$/kWh) for The Illuminating Company that are 12 months, 100% green, fixed and have no ETF, and have no monthly fee. Offers included in the average calculation per month are offers whose range includes any part of that month (e.g. an offer that is active from 2/1/2025 until 3/1/2025 will be included in both the February and the March averages).



Green Power Impact

Based on national electricity emissions, SOPEC's purchase of green power is equivalent to:

The amount
of green
power to
support:

3.3
billion

miles driven by an
electric vehicle

171

wind turbines
running for one year

202
thousand

tons of waste recycled
instead of landfilled

Greenhouse
gas
emissions
from:

635
million

pounds of
coal burned

1.4
billion

miles driven by a gas
vehicle

35
billion

number of smartphones
charged

The carbon
sequestered
by:

573
thousand

acres of U.S. forests in
one year

9.5
million

tree seedlings grown for
10 years

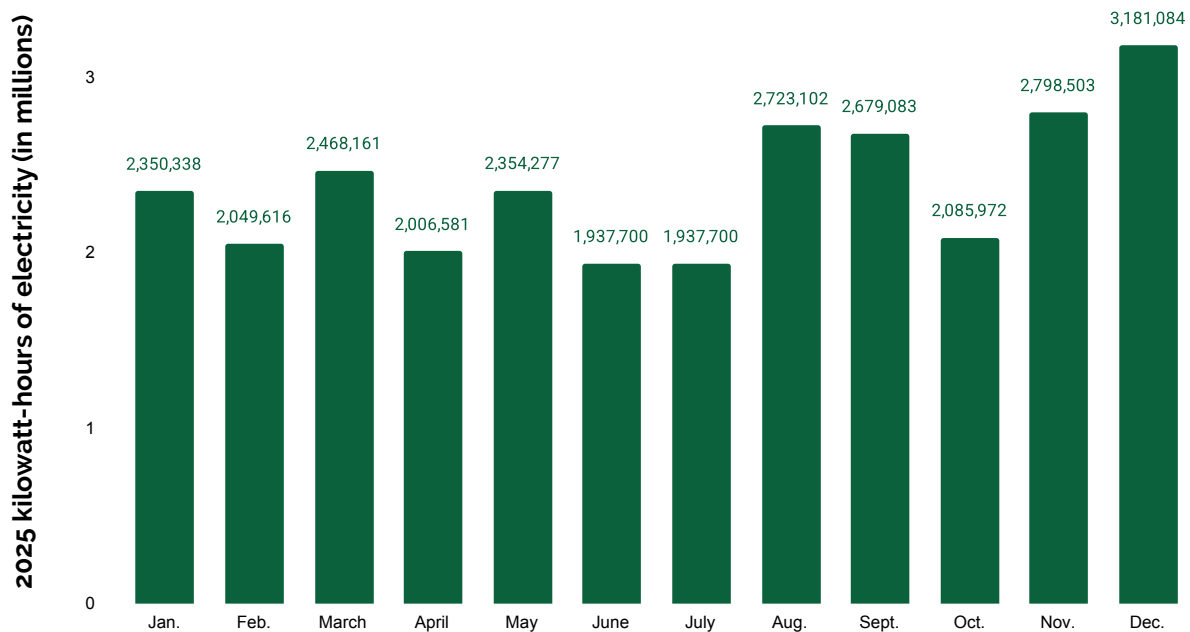




Public Pricing Program

The Public Pricing Program (P3) provides a competitive, opt-in electric supply rate for public-sector customers, including local governments (cities, villages, counties, townships), political subdivisions of Ohio, non-profit and faith-based organizations, and other public agencies with service located in a SOPEC member community. Any political subdivision in the state of Ohio can become a member and utilize this program.

Energy Consumption by the Public Pricing Program in 2025



39
customers
served

28.6 million
kWh
provided

820
accounts
served



Chillicothe, Ohio



HAPCAP in Logan, Ohio



Community & Regional Funds

Community Funds

Member communities of SOPEC with an active opt-out electric aggregation program have the option to participate in the SOPEC Community Fund Program, which provides funding for local governments to invest in community projects, including energy efficiency measures and sustainable energy projects.

Athens County | \$39,744.88

These community funds supported the construction of the Athens County 9-1-1/EMA.

Village of Rio Grande | \$500.00

These community funds supported the community's disc golf course project.

City of Dayton | \$163,000.00

These community funds in the amount of \$118,000 supported the City of Dayton for the City's Office of Sustainability, which has a special revenue account to receive SOPEC annual funding, and supported the salary of Sustainability Fellow, Tim Pritchard.

These community funds in the amount of \$45,000 supported the City of Dayton for the City's Office of Sustainability sustainability projects.

Regional Funds

Member communities of SOPEC with an active opt-out electric aggregation program have the option to participate in the Regional Fund Program, which provides funding for two or more members to collaboratively address projects that will be beneficial to each community.

Cities of Dayton and Riverside | \$38,491.74

These regional funds supported the Cities of Dayton and Riverside for the Growing Equity project, supporting access to fresh, local food for residents in Montgomery County.

Pictured: Growing Equity project flyer

GROWING EQUITY: SUPPORTING HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS FOR ALL
A Montgomery County Land Reutilization Corporation Initiative



Supporting the Village of Hemlock with Solar Knowledge

The village of Hemlock, Ohio is nestled in Perry County and home to 142 residents. In small Ohio communities, village offices are not guaranteed, but Hemlock's mayor, Jamie Knippa, leveraged resources and partnerships to bring a new office to Hemlock.

Commonly referred to as a "tiny home," the village procured a prebuilt 16-by-32-square-foot storage building to house its governmental activities, including village council meetings. Knippa organized the installation of electrical wiring, but one of the final tasks for the project was to learn about a stand-alone photovoltaic (PV) solar system as a self-sustaining electricity source for the office.

Members of the SOPEC team in Southeast Ohio worked with SOPEC's longtime partner, Jay Warmke, who has conducted solar assessments for SOPEC's Ohio Solar Assessment Program. In addition to collaborating with SOPEC on solar assessments, Warmke has trained more than 700 solar installers across the Midwest through his business, SolarPVTraining.com, and has worked to provide solar accessibility options to individuals and small businesses across the nation.

Warmke and the SOPEC team planned for up to 15 SOPEC staff members to take his training course to become Solar PV Level 1 certified. Assuming the staff passed the course, they could support SOPEC communities, like Hemlock, with in-depth knowledge about solar installation.

The SOPEC grants team secured a grant through Ohio's TechCred program to cover the cost of training and certification for the SOPEC staff.

Throughout the summer of 2025, more than half of the SOPEC team rigorously prepared for the Solar PV Level 1 certification training, which required the completion of a 40-hour course and a day of hands-on labs to learn about different types of PV systems. Eight SOPEC staff members earned their certification and are now able to support communities with in-depth solar knowledge.



SOPEC staff completing the lab session to earn their Photovoltaic Level 1 certification.



Athens SolSmart Platinum Designation and Carbon Fee

The City of Athens was awarded the prestigious SolSmart Platinum designation, the highest honor in a national program that recognizes local governments for advancing solar energy adoption. As the first city in Ohio to earn the Platinum designation and among the first ten communities nationally, Athens continues to set a benchmark in sustainable innovation and environmental stewardship.



SolSmart, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office, recognizes communities that make it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar. To earn the Platinum designation, Athens implemented instant solar permitting, installed solar on city-owned facilities, publicly posted solar metrics, and fostered strategic community partnerships through SOPEC and Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO) that drive progress and support long-term solar development and emissions reductions.

"It's not just about solar energy — it's about building a resilient, equitable, and energy-secure future for the citizens of Athens," said Athens Mayor, Steve Patterson.

"The City of Athens' SolSmart Platinum designation is an exceptional and well-deserved recognition for a community that has long led on sustainability," said PCFO Executive Director, Joe Florida.

The Athens SolSmart Platinum designation demonstrates how community engagement and policy decisions on the local level can accelerate the clean energy transition. The SolSmart Platinum designation celebrates more than solar success; it recognizes a deeply rooted, community-driven commitment to a sustainable future.

What is the Athens Carbon Fee?

Approved by 76% of Athens voters in 2018 and launched in 2020, Athens' first-of-its kind carbon fee adds 0.2 cents per kilowatt-hour to the standard electric aggregation rate. The fee, which generates roughly \$100,000 annually, funds behind-the-meter solar installations at high-value public sites. To date, it has enabled the development of 2.5 megawatts of solar at the city pool, wastewater treatment plant, community center, armory, and fire station. The combined energy savings generated from these solar projects positively impacts the city's annual budget and thus, taxpayers in the city.

\$90,992

revenue generated in 2025

45.7

million

kwh of electricity consumed



Federal Grants

The federal funding landscape experienced significant shifts in 2025. Existing grant programs, such as the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) and the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Energy for America Technical Assistance Grant (REAP TAG) programs, were placed under review and many federal agencies reset funding focus priorities to align with those of the current administration. Very few new federal grant opportunities were issued and existing funding programs were paused and delayed from original timelines.

Despite the challenges of 2025, the SOPEC team remains focused on bringing benefit and resources to our members. We have adjusted our resource development strategies to be inclusive of state, local, and private funding while also identifying and pursuing strategic partnerships and coalitions that provide access to new and additional opportunities to advance clean and affordable energy in our communities.

RIDES Powered by SOPEC

The Community and Corridor EV charging projects, Southeast to Southwest Ohio Responsive Interregional Deployment of Electrification Solutions (RIDES), funded by the CFI grant program were able to proceed with Phase 1, which authorized work and obligated funding for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and preliminary engineering activities. The project will conclude Phase 1 efforts by August 1, 2026. The CFI program remains 'under review' and SOPEC awaits guidance from US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding construction authorization and obligation of the remaining award funds.



We launched our RIDES sub-brand in 2025!

- Hired Matthew Clark as EV Project Manager and Technical Expert and Eileen Comerford as EV Southwest Project Coordinator.
- Completed competitive procurement process, including selection of CESO as NEPA preliminary engineering lead.
- Initiated NEPA in coordination with FHWA, completing initial site evaluations.
- Secured \$200K in philanthropic funding, with about \$170K applied as cost share.

USDA Programs

The USDA REAP TAG grant program was not renewed in the federal budget and the SOPEC-managed Ohio program, REAP LEAP, offering free REAP grant writing and technical assistance to eligible rural small businesses will sunset on September 30, 2026.

The USDA Renewable Energy Development Assistance (REDA) program received renewed funding and SOPEC will continue to offer free solar assessments for eligible rural small businesses and agricultural producers in Ohio with 2025-2026 grant funding through summer 2026. We await the release of the next funding cycle and will apply to continue the program for 2026-2027.

- 25 solar assessments conducted
- 3.9 million kWh in total proposed solar capacity
- Assessments conducted in 17 counties across Ohio



SOPEC Acquires Former Russell's Gas Station Site for Athens Office and EV Charging Hub

SOPEC purchased the former Russell's Gas Station at 136 Columbus Road, Athens, OH 45701, marking a significant step in the organization's plans to establish a new Athens office and develop an electric vehicle charging hub.

The property housed multiple businesses over the years, including a gas station and later an auto repair shop called Russell's Riverside Service. The site has been unoccupied for years.

The Athens County Port Authority received a \$225,183 assessment grant from the Ohio Department of Development's Brownfield Remediation Program to support environmental cleanup at the site. Remediation involved the removal of subsurface piping, approximately five 55-gallon barrels of petroleum-contaminated soil, and asbestos tile from inside the building. Additionally, monitoring wells were installed on site to continue to assess groundwater integrity.

SOPEC plans to keep the original building and convert it into community rooms and SOPEC office space, with the goal of maintaining the history of the location while replacing fossil fuel infrastructure with EV charging. The station is planned to feature up to four DC fast-charging ports, each capable of delivering at least 150 kilowatts.

The project is part of a broader redevelopment push along the Columbus Road corridor, which has seen several significant investments in recent years.

SOPEC staff pictured with the former Russell's Gas Station.





Market Volatility & Future Outlook

Electricity prices are rising across the PJM Interconnection. PJM spans from Chicago to the East Coast. PJM operates a competitive wholesale electricity market & manages the reliability of its transmission grid, including all of Ohio.

Capacity charges (key component of the supply rate) have risen across PJM regional grid.

- Capacity charges fund the power plants that are called upon to run during times of peak electric usage, for example, on the hottest summer days.
- Like insurance against power outages — ensure that there is enough electricity available during periods of peak electricity usage.
- PJM runs an auction to purchase this electricity from power plants that can meet emergency demand.
- These capacity prices at auction have increased significantly and hit all-time highs.

Increases in capacity charges largely attributed to higher demand from **data centers**, retirements of older power plants, & delays in bringing new generation online.

- This increase is impacting everyone in the PJM region, not just SOPEC customers.

While capacity charges are outside of our control, SOPEC's **fixed-term rate** structure helps ensure residents and small businesses see **stability and predictability** on their electric bills. Additional solutions include reducing energy consumption, on-site solar, power purchase agreements, hedging strategies, etc. Lastly, deploying renewable energy is the fastest way to add new power capacity to the electricity grid.



PJM 2028/2029 BRA RESULTS

Capacity shortfall persists despite price cap

Auction clears below reliability requirement with capped pricing

RTO CLEARING PRICE (CAPPED)

\$325 /MW-day

Price cap is binding in 2028/2029
No LDA price separation in actual results

UNCAPPED SIMULATION (NO CAP / NO FLOOR)

RTO PRICE COMED PRICE
\$554 **\$777**
/MW-day /MW-day

Simulation uses existing offers; PJM does not know how offers may have changed without the temporary cap and floor.

SHORTFALL VS RELIABILITY REQUIREMENT

-6,831
MW

Below Reliability
Requirement

KEY DRIVERS OF 2028/2029 RESULTS

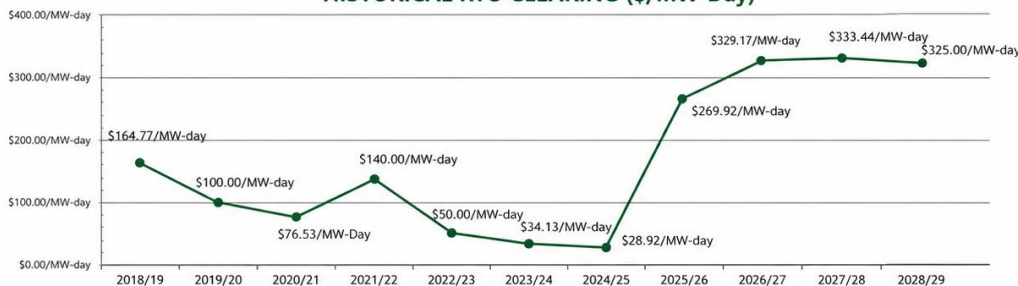
SUPPLY SIDE

- Coal retirements: -3,541 MW
- Additionally offered gas: +5,550 MW
- Limited new entry: ~525 MW
- Imports increased to 1,041 MW

DEMAND SIDE

- +1,374.5 MW increase in forecasted load
- Driven by large loads
- Rising peak demand expectations

HISTORICAL RTO CLEARING (\$/MW-Day)



149.2 GW

Total Capacity
(incl. RPM + FRR)

14.7%

Total Reserve
Margin (incl. FRR)
Target is 20%

+1,374 MW
Forecasted Load
Increase

\$16.4B
Cost to
Consumers

KEY TAKEAWAY

PJM capacity supply continues to lag demand growth and retirements. The binding price cap masks extreme scarcity, sending artificially low investment signals. Price caps exist until 2030/31 delivery year

Source: PJM 2028/2029 Reliability Pricing Model (RPM) Base Residual Auction Results (July 2026)



Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in 2025!





Contact Us



support@sopec-oh.gov
614-259-8080
www.sopec-oh.gov

Follow us on social media!

