

# Welcome!


What's the Deal with  
NorthWestern Energy?

# Why are we here?

Because NorthWestern has not been like utilities...

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**BRIEF**

## Xcel commits to eliminate carbon emissions by 2050

**AUTHOR**  
Gavin Bade  
@GavinBade

**PUBLISHED**  
Dec. 4, 2018

**Dive Brief:**

- Xcel Energy on Tuesday announced plans to eliminate carbon emissions from its power plants by 2050, making it what company officials call the first major multi-state U.S. utility with a commitment to completely phase out the planet-warming pollutant.

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## Omaha World-Herald

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### Iowa's biggest utility aims to produce all its energy from renewable sources

May 1, 2017


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New developments help Nebraska take advantage of its capacity for wind power, which accounted for more than 10 percent of its energy in 2016.

DES MOINES (AP) — Iowa's largest utility is in the midst of a \$3.6 billion investment in wind power with a goal of producing 100 percent of its energy from renewable sources.

MidAmerican Energy plans to build 1,000 more turbines over the next couple of years on top of the more than 2,000 it already has around the state, the Des Moines Register reported. When it's completed, the utility's share of its energy that comes from renewable sources will jump from 55 percent to nearly 90 percent.

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You are here: Home » Subject » Coal ash » South Carolina utility changes course, plans coal plant closure and new solar generation

IEEFA September 10, 2019

### South Carolina utility changes course, plans coal plant closure and new solar generation



**The Post & Courier:**

Santee Cooper's board approved a new business strategy Monday, shifting the state-run utility's energy forecast away from coal and toward solar power and gas-fired plants.

But the board abandoned a proposed cost-saving agreement with The Southern Co. — one of the largest investor-owned utilities in the Southeast — after state officials objected to the planned partnership. Mark Bonsall, Santee Cooper's new CEO, wanted to explore ways the two power companies could save money by jointly managing their fuel supplies, purchasing, energy trading and coal ash waste.

Bonsall's other proposals for Santee Cooper were easier for the board members to accept. After a short presentation, the board voted unanimously on a strategy that will drastically cut the amount of power the utility generates from coal-fired plants.

The decision to shutter the coal-fired power plant comes at a time when Santee Cooper is trying to

# Why are we here?

**KIVI BOISE**  
ON YOUR SIDE

NEWS

## Idaho Power announces 100% clean energy goal by 2045

Posted: 9:12 AM, Mar 26, 2019 Updated: 9:12 AM, Mar 26, 2019  
By: Steve Bertel



BOISE — Idaho Power Tuesday announced a goal to provide 100 percent clean energy by the year 2045. In addition to its hydro facilities — which typically meet almost half its customers' energy demands, officials said — Idaho Power plans additional investment in wind, solar and other clean sources.

**AVISTA**

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## Avista builds on commitment to renewable energy with goal of 100 percent clean electricity by 2045

04/18/19  
Company plans for carbon-neutral electricity supply by the end of 2027

[PDF Version](#)

SPOKANE, Wash., April 18, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Avista(NYSE:AVA), a leader in clean electricity, today announced its goal to serve its customers with 100 percent clean electricity by 2045 and to have a carbon-neutral supply of electricity by the end of 2027. This announcement bolsters Avista's long-standing history of and well-established approach to providing clean, reliable and affordable electricity.

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## PGE plans 150 MWa renewables, 4 MW storage, finds wind cheaper than gas to meet future capacity

Credit: Exponent/istock

**Dive Brief:**

- Portland General Electric wants to add an average 150 MW of renewables by 2023 along with energy efficiency and 4 MW energy storage.
- The utility on July 19 filed its 2019 [Integrated Resource Plan \(IRP\)](#) with the Oregon Public Utility Commission, noting that it has approximately 350 MW of capacity contracts that expire in the mid-2020s and that it will also be shutting down the coal-fired Boardman plant next year.

AUTHOR  
Bobbet Walton  
@TeamWestDog


PUBLISHED  
July 23, 2019

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## PacifiCorp's 20-year electricity plan for Utah dials back on coal, amps up on wind and solar

"We're proud to announce this for our environment while continuing today and well into the future, clean, renewable hydro power mix that is more than half renewable."

"Avista has always been committed to responsibility for our environment. In the past three years, we've implemented..."



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By Brian Maffly • Published: October 3 Updated: October 04, 2019

Utah's electricity customers will be getting a lot less of their power from coal and a lot more from renewable sources over the next several years under a plan PacifiCorp unveiled Thursday.

**TRENDING**

- Jana Riese: Why do Latter-day Saints ignore the Pearl of Great Price?

# Why are we here?

azcentral.

## SRP plans to install Arizona's biggest battery for massive solar plant

Ryan Randazzo, Arizona Republic Published 3:58 p.m. MT Nov. 14, 2019 | Updated 8:05 p.m. MT Nov. 15, 2019

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The Pinal Central Solar Energy Center is a 20-megawatt solar plant east of Casa Grande. Salt River Project announced a much larger project Nov. 14, 2019. (Photo: Salt River Project)

Salt River Project will build the biggest battery on the power grid in Arizona as part of its pledge last year to add 1,000 megawatts of solar to its supply by 2025.

The big battery project is planned for the Little Rainbow Valley, south of Buckeye, and the battery system there will be many times larger than anything in Arizona today.

Utilities are adding batteries to the power grid so that they can charge with abundant solar energy in the day, and discharge that power at night, when customers use a lot of electricity but solar plants don't create any.

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# Why are we here?

Because NorthWestern has not been like utilities...

**But it can be!**

**Utilities can be the hero**  
**in the climate fight!**

# Why are we here?

- Unfortunately, NorthWestern has been:
  - Fighting renewable energy policies
  - Fighting to make customers pay exorbitant prices for coal energy (aka the “Colstrip Bad Deal”)
  - Only wants to build expensive fossil fuel gas plants
    - 2019 “Resource Plan” = zero new wind/solar
    - Only new fossil fuel gas plants

# Why are we here?

- Because NorthWestern has been:
  - Bad for climate change
  - Bad for ratepayers
  - Shows no signs of stopping

# Company Overview

- For-profit company (with South Dakota HQ)

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**NorthWestern Corp**  
NYSE: NWE  
**75.1849 -0.1651**

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# Company Overview

- **For-profit company** (with South Dakota HQ)
- Board of Directors: Only 2 of 8 are Montanans (1 = Bob Rowe)
- State protected monopoly in exchange for additional regulation
- Company must follow law, so its lobbyists and lawyers shape Montana laws to increase company profits



**Travis Kavulla** ✓  
@TKavulla

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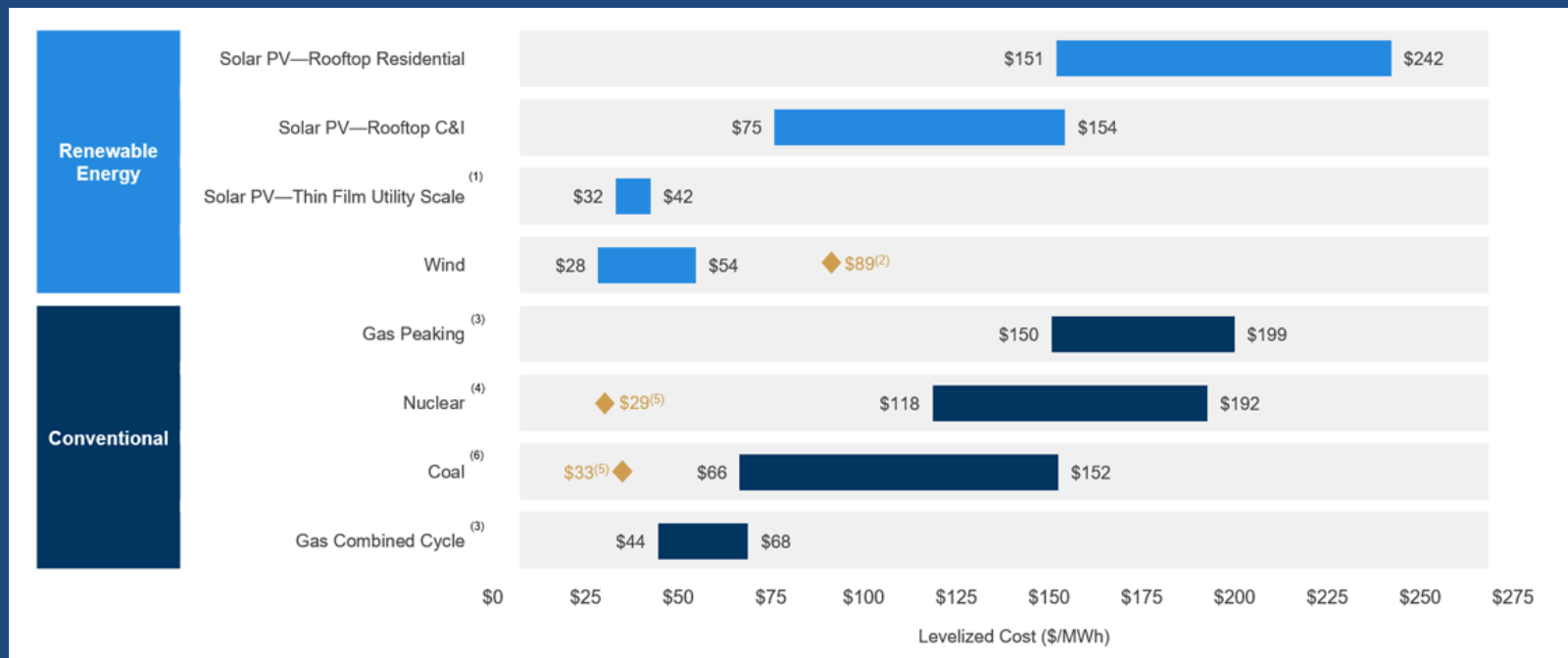
Many Republican Legislators: "We are are pro-business. This monopoly utility is a business. Where do I sign?"

# Utility Decision Making

- What do utility executives consider when making decisions?
  - Profit
  - Profit
  - Profit
  - Keep the lights on (to facilitate profit)
- Utility business model is cost+
  - Add up all spending
  - Multiply by “reasonable profit margin” (~10%)
  - That’s it (simplified)
  - Therefore: More expensive energy = more profit for utility

# Utility Decision Making

- Problem for utility executives:
  - Renewable energy now cheaper than fossil fuels

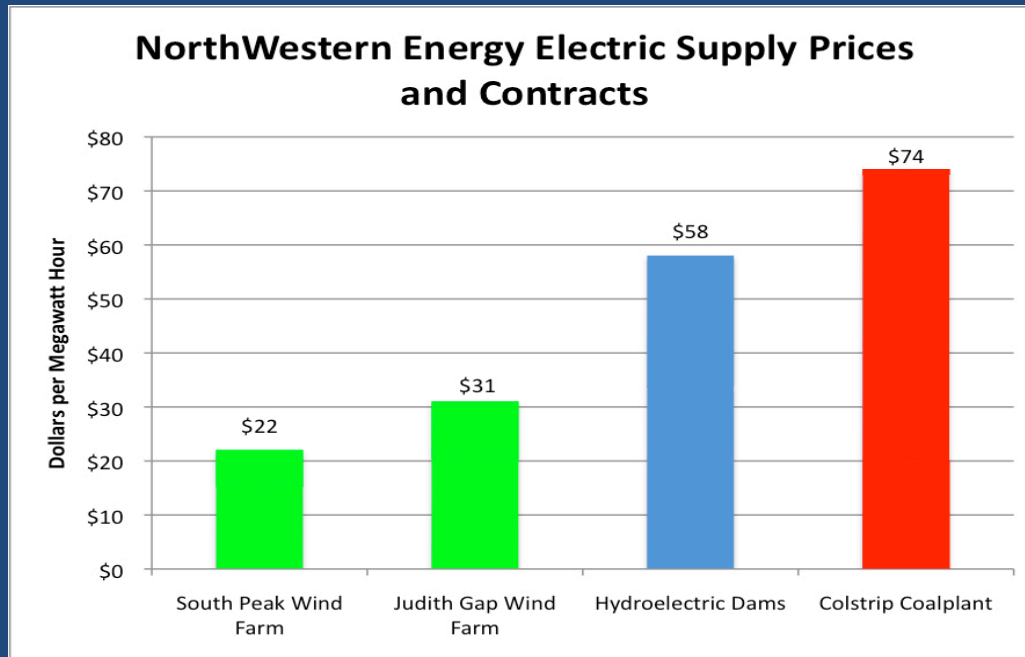


Source: Lazard Levelized Cost of Energy (2019)



# Utility Decision Making

- Problem for utility executives:



*Source: Montana Consumer Counsel (2018)*

# Utility Decision Making


- Problem for NorthWestern executives:

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**BRIEF**

## Los Angeles approves 'historically low cost' solar+storage project



*Credit: Murtenson Construction*

**AUTHOR**  
Robert Walton  
@TeamWetDog

**PUBLISHED**  
Sept. 11, 2019

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### Dive Brief:

- Los Angeles regulators on Tuesday approved a "historically low cost" solar + storage project, which includes 400 MW of solar generation and a 300 MW / 1,200 MWh battery.
- The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) Board of Commission says its approval of the power purchase agreements for the Eland Solar and Storage Center, will help the city reach 100% renewable power by 2045. City officials say the Eland project was selected from a pool of 130 proposals due to its scale and price, which includes a fixed cost of less than \$0.02/kWh.

- 400 MW Solar
- 300 MW Battery (big!)
- \$20/MWh (cheap!)

How Has the Company Been  
Bad for Climate and  
Ratepayers?

# Attacking Rooftop Solar

## Endless Attacks on Rooftop Solar

- Rooftop solar = competition, less spending (i.e. less profit)
- Consistent attacks at legislature
- Always trying to harm rooftop solar economics (new fees, reduced value for excess energy)
- Happening Now: BIG attack by company in “Rate Case” at PSC

# Expensive Coal Energy

## The Colstrip Bad Deal (Part 1)

2007: NorthWestern shareholders buy Colstrip share for **\$187 million**.

2008: Company gets Colstrip put into customer's rates as if it's worth **\$407 million** (not the \$187M actually paid).

Through this unusual maneuver NorthWestern executives created hundreds of millions of dollars in profit (paid for by Montanans).

**This is why NorthWestern wants to keep Colstrip running.**

# Expensive Coal Energy

## The Colstrip Bad Deal (Part 2)

2019 Legislature: NorthWestern pushed extreme bills to force ratepayers to buy more of Colstrip (SB 278, SB 331)

Would have put ratepayers on the hook for untold millions in costs (expensive operations + cleanup)

BIG hit to company reputation

# They Know They're In Trouble

Massive TV advertising campaign to mend the company's image  
(expensive!)





# Going Forward

# Expensive Gas Plants

- NorthWestern only wants to build gas plants
  - 2019 “Resource Plan” = zero new wind/solar for next 20 years
  - Only new gas plants
  - Pretends Colstrip will run 20+ years
- Gas plants = CO<sub>2</sub> and methane
- More expensive = more profit
  - Gas plants require major infrastructure (pipelines, etc)
  - NWE needs new pipelines for gas plant build out

# Expensive Gas Plants

“The natural gas pipelines that serve NorthWestern’s service territory are **near full capacity**. [...] Installation of significant new natural-gas fired generation **anywhere in the NorthWestern service territory will likely require pipeline capacity upgrades** or interruptible pipeline service with diesel fuel backup.”

– *NWE 2013 long-term resource plan, page 5-23*

# The Process

- Process for new power plant approval”
  1. Create 20-year plan, identify least-cost way to meet future energy need
    - We are here
    - Utilities manipulate this step
  2. Issue Request for Proposals (RFP)
    - Utilities manipulate this step
  3. Get Public Service Commission approval by pointing to 20-year plan and RFP process

# Submit Comments to PSC

- PSC accepting comments now on Resource Plan (Jan 3rd deadline)
- Email: [psc\\_utilitycomment@mt.gov](mailto:psc_utilitycomment@mt.gov)
- Include: “Regarding docket 2019.08.052”
  - For example: “This comment is regarding docket 2019.08.052”
- **PSC Comment Hearing:**
  - December 9, 2019 @ 1:30pm and 5pm
  - PSC Helena Office (1701 Prospect Ave)

# Public Service Commission

- 5 elected commissioners
- Approve/deny new power plants (and more!)

The image displays a map of Montana divided into five districts for the Public Service Commission. Each district is color-coded and labeled with its name and the name of its commissioner. District 1 (pink) includes counties like Daniels, Phillips, and Valley, with Randy Pinocci as the commissioner. District 2 (light blue) includes counties like Yellowstone, Big Horn, and Carbon, with Tony O'Donnell as the commissioner. District 3 (yellow) includes counties like Yellowstone, Big Horn, and Carbon, with Roger Koopman as the commissioner. District 4 (green) includes counties like Sanders, Lake, and Missoula, with Bob Lake as the commissioner. District 5 (blue) includes counties like Flathead, Lake, and Missoula, with Brad Johnson as the commissioner. The map also shows other counties like Lincoln, Mineral, Powell, Granite, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Jefferson, Broadwater, Meagher, Wheatland, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Petroleum, Garfield, McCone, Richland, Dawson, Wilbur, Prairie, Custer, Fallon, and Powder River. A note at the bottom of the map reads 'Public Service Commission Districts Map Created by PSC IT Dept.'

**Brad Johnson (R)**  
Chariman  
District 5

**Randy Pinocci**  
~~Eric Kavalla (R)~~  
~~Vice Chair~~  
District 1

**Bob Lake (R)**  
District 4

**Roger Koopman (R)**  
District 3

**Tony O'Donnell (R)**  
District 2

Public Service Commission  
Districts Map Created by PSC IT Dept.

# Grassroots Outreach

- **We are customers**

- We can demand action of our utility
- Your wants are legitimate - don't have to be engineer, lawyer, etc.

- **We are citizens**

- We can demand action of our representatives
  - Public Service Commissioners
  - Governor, Legislators
  - Cities and counties
  - Montana Consumer Counsel
    - 406.444.2771
    - Bob Nelson (robnelson@mt.gov)



# Grassroots Outreach

Join your local orgs fighting for a clean energy future!

- We will keep you informed, confident
- Alerts for opportunities to make a difference

# Why are we here?

- Because today NorthWestern is not....



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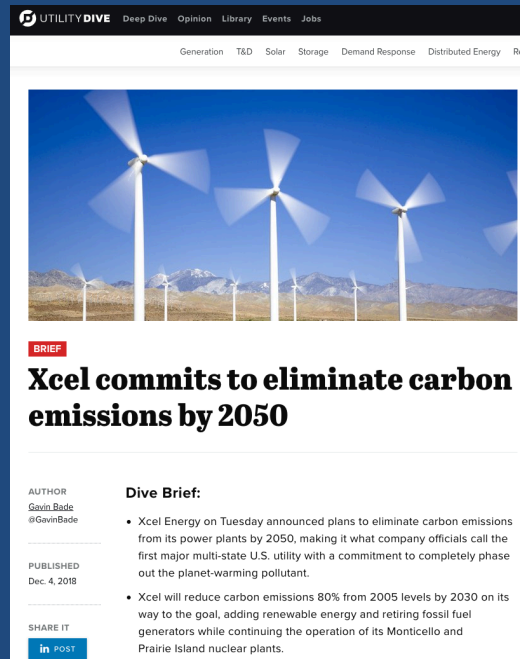
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- Xcel will reduce carbon emissions 80% from 2005 levels by 2030 on its way to the goal, adding renewable energy and retiring fossil fuel generators while continuing the operation of its Monticello and Prairie Island nuclear plants.



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NEWS

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But together we can make it so!

# Thank You!

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- Interest in GF city activity?