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Duke Energy Brings First 820 MW of New Florida Gas Plant Online

Duke Energy Brings First 820 MW of New Florida Gas Plant Online

10/31/2018 | Darrell Proctor

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Duke Energy has brought the first power block of its new \$1.5 billion combined cycle gas plant in Citrus County, Florida, online. Duke said the facility located north of Crystal River—an area long known as home to the now-closed Crystal River Nuclear Plant—is among the largest combined cycle projects in the country, and it is Duke Energy’s largest combined cycle plant under construction.

The plant will enable Duke Energy to retire two coal-fired units at the Crystal River Energy Complex site that have operated since 1966 and 1969, respectively. Those retirements will leave the utility with just two remaining coal-fired units in Florida, the Units 4 and 5 at Crystal River, with total generation capacity of 1,422 MW. Those units began operation in 1982.

Duke Energy put the first 820 MW of power generation from the new gas plant into operation on October 26. It expects to bring the second 820 MW online by year-end. The utility in a news release said the plant’s construction and other related activities have provided a \$600 million economic boost to the region on Florida’s Gulf Coast, north of the Tampa Bay area and west of Orlando. Duke Energy said the plant is expected to have an annual economic impact of about \$13 million once fully operational.

Fluor Has EPC Contract

Fluor, which built the coal-fired Units 4 and 5 at Crystal River, received the engineering, procurement, and construction contract for the new gas plant in 2015 and began construction in 2016. Duke Energy in April said it would have the new plant fully operational (<https://www.powermag.com/duke-energy-ready-to-commission-new-florida-gas-plant/>) by the end of 2018.

Harry Sideris, president of Duke Energy Florida, earlier this year said, “Our customers expect and deserve cleaner energy, and building highly efficient natural gas infrastructure is critical to delivering on our commitment to a low-carbon energy future. Natural gas is also an important part of our modernization strategy to continue delivering energy that is cleaner while meeting the growing energy needs of Floridians.”

Duke Energy Florida, headquartered in St. Petersburg, has about 9,000 MW of generation capacity in the state across a 13,000-square-mile service area.

About 2,800 construction jobs were created by the project, with more than 750 workers still at the site. Duke Energy said as many as 75 workers will staff the plant. Construction of the plant began in 2016.

Gas Sourced from Sabal Trail Pipeline

The new plant is sourcing natural gas from the recently constructed 515-mile Sabal Trail pipeline, a \$3.2 billion project that runs from Alabama into Georgia, and ends in central Florida. A lateral pipeline extends to the Citrus County plant, which also includes a metering and regulating station for the pipeline.

Duke Energy holds a \$225 million, or 7.5%, ownership stake in the pipeline. Sabal Trail is one of three gas pipelines used by the utility to supply its Florida facilities.

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The new plant has four G-series combustion turbine generators—Model 501GAC—from Japan's Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems. Duke Energy earlier this year said plant will further its program to decrease emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO_x), and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). Duke Energy Florida said that since 2005, it has cut CO₂ emissions by 21%, SO_x by 91%, and NO_x by 75% in the state.

The plant is near the site of the shuttered Crystal River Nuclear Plant, which began operations in 1977 and was officially closed in 2013. The plant went offline in September 2009 for scheduled maintenance and refueling, but while replacing two 500-ton steam generators, engineers discovered a delamination (<https://www.powermag.com/gap-in-containment-building-keeps-crystal-river-shut-down-indefinitely/>), or separation of concrete, within the containment building that surrounds the reactor vessel.

Repairs were successful, but more delamination was found in two other areas of the containment building in 2011. The plant at the time was owned by Progress Energy, which was acquired by Duke Energy in 2012. Duke Energy in February 2013 said it would retire the nuclear plant rather than make further repairs.

—**Darrell Proctor** is a POWER associate editor (@DarrellProctor1, @POWERmagazine).

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AN ICONIC NUCLEAR PLANT SHUTS DOWN

The Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station in New Jersey, the oldest operating nuclear plant in the U.S., was shut down on September 17, 2018.

For more, see "**Oldest U.S. Nuclear Plant Shuts Down**

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- X-ELIO and Sofos Harbert announce partnership to develop solar projects in the US (<https://www.powermag.com/press-releases/x-elio-and-sofos-harbert-announce-partnership-to-develop-solar-projects-in-the-us/>)
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- POWER-GEN International, 12/04 - 12/06 (<https://www.power-gen.com/event-information/powermag.html?cmpid=powermag>)
- 3rd Annual Connected Plant Conference, 02/19 - 02/21 (<http://connectedplantconference.com>)
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