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CONSUMERS ENERGY DEDICATES FIRST EVER SOLAR, BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEMS ON GRAND RAPIDS' WEST SIDE

Jan 23, 2019

Circuit West District Provides Glimpse at Michigan's Energy Future

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Jan. 23, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Consumers Energy today dedicated Michigan's first ever rooftop solar array and battery storage system in a vibrant and growing area of Grand Rapids.



Nearly 1,800 solar panels atop the Bridge Street Market and adjoining buildings between Bridge and First Streets within the Circuit West district are accompanied nearby by a 500-kilowatt battery. It's the first such energy distribution setup in Michigan and one of the first in the country intended to make renewable energy increasingly reliable and cost effective.

"Today, there is very little storage on the grid, so electricity is generated just moments before you use it," said Garrick Rochow, Consumers Energy's senior vice president of operations. "With large batteries, we will make our grid more efficient, effective and sustainable. It's a critical part of Michigan's energy future and it's happening here at Circuit West."

Circuit West is a 13-block district of innovative electricity generation, distribution and storage and energy efficient building construction. Circuit West is led by Consumers Energy and Rockford Construction.

"With this first-of-its-kind solar, battery storage system, West Michigan is leading the way to our clean energy future," said Senator Debbie Stabenow. "Projects like Circuit West will ensure more families and businesses have greener and more reliable energy."

Stabenow was joined by leaders from Consumers Energy, Rockford Construction and the City of Grand Rapids to announce the electric distribution and storage system today at the West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology, 614 First Street NW, one of the many new buildings springing up within Circuit West.

"This rooftop solar array can power up to 100 homes and is part of Consumers Energy's commitment to increasing our use of renewable energy to 40 percent and ending our use of coal to generate electricity," Rochow said. "Our Circuit West work is putting into action our triple bottom line of People, the Planet and Prosperity."

The Circuit West battery, which goes into commercial operation in a few weeks, joins a 1-megawatt battery installed last fall at the company's Parkview Substation on Western Michigan University's Kalamazoo campus. Rochow said Consumers Energy is studying each battery's performance to determine how to best use and integrate the technology across the electric distribution grid.

Consumers Energy earlier announced it will construct a new Grand Rapids office building within Circuit West. Construction is expected to begin later this year.

Consumers Energy, Michigan's largest energy provider, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and/or electricity to 6.7 million of the state's 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

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