



Mbabane texas energy storage

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A different kind of energy rush is sweeping across America's petroleum superstates. Texas still holds vast oil reserves, but it also has a lot of sun, wind, heat, and demand for electricity. It's not a new technology. In fact, it doesn't actually generate energy at all, but stores and releases it at just the right time.

It's not because of an aggressive state push towards decarbonisation. It's because in Texas it's relatively easy to build infrastructure and big projects than in other states.

Renewables have added vital capacity for the state's energy authority. Electrically separated from the rest of the USA, it can't rely on other states in a crisis. But the influx of solar energy in particular has meant that the regulator has had to juggle a fundamental switch in peak demand.

It actually has shifted to later in the evening when the sun starts to set, the solar energy has gone away, but they're still warm and hot outside, so the air conditioning load is still very high. Those solar ran periods have become the highest risk periods on the grid during the summer.

Just a couple of days ago there was an outage of a large generation coal plant. And there are enough batteries now that they jumped in and batteries can deploy in microseconds. So they were able to stop any issue from happening. The grid stayed stable.

The output from this single 100-megawatt array could power at least 20,000 homes. Strategically positioned near the energy-sapping data centres in the Metroplex of Dallas-Fort Worth, it's only a few years old, but already being superseded by the next generation of larger battery systems coming online.

We're going to take excess wind and solar generation, mostly coming out of the Texas panhandle, where there aren't as many people, that's going to be held in the battery, and then we're going to put it back out on the grid when the need arises.

So it's mid-morning, the sun is up, and hundreds of solar energy projects across the state are rapidly ramping up their power production. That's having the impact of depressing electricity prices, which means we're naturally incentivised to charge from that energy right now. We're then going to hold on to it for the majority of the day. Sun goes down, people come home from work, turn on their air conditioners, and we're going to discharge that energy for a profit.

The market is constantly comparing supply and demand and producing price signals for electricity products. We have a wholesale power market team that is watching the forecast for solar. It's watching the forecast for wind. And it's watching the forecast for load. And without a doubt, our net income is dependent on their skills as traders.

Those kinds of ups and downs are one of the unique characteristics of the energy-only market. But that volatility helps to incentivise the right type of generating resources coming onto the grid.

Juggling numbers in a constantly changing market is just one of the variables in the battery storage game. Systems are expensive to instal and maintain, and many components have to be imported from China and other external sources, leaving operators vulnerable to supply chain interruptions.

I think that's something that all of us are weighing a bit. We also have some political winds as well with discussions about tariffs on Chinese batteries. And so you have to weigh that into your calculation. It's a constantly changing landscape.

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