

Celebrating Success: Aerojet General Corporation Site Rancho Cordova, California



Superfund
Redevelopment
Initiative



Solar farm prior to construction (2009).

“We started by asking how we could work with this otherwise encumbered property and turn it into something that would benefit both [Aerojet] and the community.” – Ronald Samborsky, Aerojet Vice-President of Renewable Energy and Sustainability



Completed solar farm (2010).

“While our priority was making sure that the solar project would not impact the site’s cleanup, we were also interested in supporting an innovative, green remediation project like this. The Superfund program places a high value on supporting the return of sites to productive and beneficial use.” – Kevin Mayer, EPA Project Manager



A public-private partnership between Aerojet, Solar Power, Inc. and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District has led to the development of a remarkable 40-acre solar farm on the Aerojet General Corporation Superfund site near Sacramento. Close coordination between the project developers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and state regulatory agencies helped ensure the effectiveness of the site’s ongoing cleanup throughout installation and operation.

The Aerojet General Corporation Superfund site covers 5,900 acres near Rancho Cordova. Since 1953, Aerojet and its subsidiaries have manufactured rocket engines and formulated a number of chemicals. Disposal and operation practices led to soil and ground water contamination. EPA listed the site on its National Priorities List (NPL) of contaminated sites in 1983. Since the site’s listing, efforts have been underway to contain and address contaminated ground water using multiple ground water pump-and-treat systems. Additional work is planned to further prevent contaminant migration and to clean up soil and ground water contamination sources.

In 2008, Aerojet began planning to convert a portion of its facility into a solar farm to help power the site’s extensive ground water remediation program. Aerojet also viewed this as an opportunity to reduce the company’s carbon footprint and improve energy usage as part of parent company GenCorp’s Sustainability Initiative. The project made fiscal and environmental sense for the company and its partners and the project moved forward rapidly.

The first solar arrays were installed in 2009; the final arrays were installed in April 2010. In total, 22 solar arrays track the daily course of the sun, generating six megawatts (MW) of power. The electricity produced provides more than 20 percent of the energy needed to power the site’s ground water remediation program. Thanks to forward thinking and creative partnerships, the Aerojet solar farm is as a leading example of how environmentally impaired lands can be transformed into energy-producing environmental assets.

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