

University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Ranks Number 25 Nationally on EPA's List of On-Site Green Power Users

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign made the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's top-30 list of the largest on-site green power users.

CHAMPAIGN, IL, UNITED STATES,
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-- The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign made the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [top-30 list of the largest on-site green power users](#) in the Green Power Partnership (GPP). The university ranks number 25 nationally after producing more than 16,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) of green power between July 2020 and June 2021.

The U of I joins prominent companies, such as Apple, Procter & Gamble, Walmart Inc., Target, Intel, and IKEA, on the list, which ranks businesses and organizations based on their annual green power usage, on-site generation of green power, and the green power percentage of their annual electricity usage. Because of the output from two utility-scale solar farms and multiple rooftop arrays, the university is now third among U.S. universities in on-site clean power production. The university's total will increase next year, as this period only accounts for five months of Solar Farm 2.0 production after commercial operations began on January 29, 2021.

Interim Executive Director of Facilities & Services Ehab Kamarah said, "Making the EPA list for the first time and receiving this recognition is a tremendous achievement that is only possible because of the ongoing collaboration and the commitment of students, faculty, and staff to pursue renewable energy resources that reduce the university's carbon footprint, increase research opportunities, and conserve our natural resources."

The university's sustainability initiatives and renewable energy goals are outlined in the [Illinois Climate Action Plan \(iCAP\)](#). The iCAP is the university's strategic plan to meet Climate Leadership Commitments, including being carbon neutral as soon as possible and building resilience to climate change in the local community.

[The Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment \(iSEE\)](#) supports sustainable campus



Facilities & Services

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solutions through the implementation of iCAP objectives and related initiatives that demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship and set a path toward a clean energy future. iSEE works with faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community members to reach these objectives.

“We are excited that our campus can be recognized for our progress on green power,” iSEE Interim Director Madhu Khanna said, “and we look forward to continuing the efforts to find low-carbon energy sources and to reduce emissions as we strive to reach carbon neutrality as soon as possible.”

According to the U.S. EPA, the university’s yearly total green power usage of 39,000 MWh is equivalent to the annual electricity use of nearly 4,000 average American homes. By fiscal year 2025, the university aims for 140,000 MWh/year of clean power or realizing approximately 30 percent of its annual electrical demand.

“This list of the largest users of green power across the nation is proof that good business practices can also benefit the environment,” said James Critchfield, program manager of EPA’s GPP. “EPA applauds the leading organizations in the Top Partner Rankings for their notable commitment to expanding their use of green power and protecting the environment.”

Integrating greater amounts of renewable energy into campus operations through new facility construction, major renovation projects, and purchase agreements will help the university reach future energy milestones. The U of I’s commitment to using green power also helps advance the voluntary market for renewable energy and further development and availability of those sources.

Director of Utilities & Energy Services at F&S Rob Roman said, “This success is a credit to our staff who work persistently to achieve these green power targets, regardless of the project challenges and technical complexities. We are also proud to partner with campus research teams and support the testing and research of many new technologies in the energy production sector, such as carbon capture techniques and energy storage systems that will ensure the university continues to be a leader in discovery and innovation.”

Notable campus green power accomplishments to date include the following:

- Solar Farm 2.0 near the Village of Savoy was energized in January 2021. Combined with Solar Farm 1.0 and other rooftop and ground-mounted solar installations, the campus will generate more than 27,000 MWh/year.
- The university receives a percentage-based portion of the wind-generated electricity and associated environmental attributes from the Rail Splitter Wind Farm located north of Lincoln, Illinois. The annual amount of approximately 25,000 MWh will continue until October 2026.
- The innovative 60,000 gross square feet (GSF) interdisciplinary Siebel Center for Design uses a 58.8kW rooftop system with 156 photovoltaic panels.

- A geothermal system at the new 122,000 GSF Campus Instructional Facility is expected to reduce annual energy consumption in the building by 65 percent, compared to a conventional heating and cooling system, and provide an annual savings of \$45,000.
- The Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) Building features 970 rooftop panels, as a part of design striving to be net-zero energy or producing as much energy as consumed. Since solar production started in April 2019, 11 percent of all power supplied to the ECE Building has come from the array, while additional output is reserved for research and educational activities.

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