New Virtual Power Plant Company Launches with Zero Down Batteries; Focus on Opportunity Zone Communities

Bridgeport, CT Selected for PowerSmart’s First Planned 1,000-Battery Portfolio

Logo of PowerSmart

BRIDGEPORT, CT, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- PowerSmart today announced its launch as a new virtual power plant company focused on deploying residential battery storage and building distributed energy infrastructure in Opportunity Zone and underserved communities across America.

PowerSmart has selected Bridgeport, Connecticut, for its first planned portfolio, equivalent in scale to approximately 1,000 residential batteries. It may include a combination of individual residential batteries and larger systems serving multifamily housing. Operating together as a coordinated Virtual Power Plant, these systems will be capable of reducing peak electricity demand and providing grid services, emergency support and dispatchable capacity to utilities and energy markets.

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>
> *Seth Kiner, CEO, PowerSmart*

Bridgeport is one of Connecticut’s most economically challenged communities, and many of its residents’ face some of the nation’s highest household energy burdens.

PowerSmart selected the city as its first market because it represents both the need—and the opportunity—to direct next-generation energy infrastructure into communities that have too often been left behind.

“One battery is a personal backup; a thousand batteries is critical infrastructure,” said Seth Kiner, CEO of PowerSmart. “Virtual power plants aren't just about grid reliability, they’re about economic equity. We’re empowering Opportunity Zone communities to generate their own power, lower their costs, and build lasting financial resilience from the ground up.”

PowerSmart's business model is designed to address three barriers that have limited the growth of residential virtual power plants:

- The upfront cost of residential battery systems;
- The difficulty of acquiring and enrolling customers at sufficient scale; and
- The failure of many clean-energy programs to reach lower-income and underserved communities.

PowerSmart addresses the first barrier by providing qualifying households with residential battery systems at no upfront cost and aggregating those systems into coordinated energy portfolios.

Customer education, outreach and enrollment will be conducted through PowerSmart's exclusive partnership with SmartPower, a nationally recognized nonprofit clean-energy marketing organization. Launched in Connecticut more than 20 years ago, SmartPower has worked with states, municipalities, utilities and community organizations to build public understanding of clean-energy technologies and turn consumer interest into action.

PowerSmart will initially focus on Opportunity Zone communities and lower-income neighborhoods, creating a model through which private infrastructure investment can deliver measurable benefits to residents, communities and the electric grid.

"Historically, underserved communities have been asked to wait their turn for the benefits of new energy technologies," said Jeff Kohn, Chief Operating Officer of PowerSmart. "We believe these communities should be first in line. PowerSmart offers investors and community leaders a practical model for directing energy infrastructure investment into neighborhoods where improved resilience, reduced energy burdens and new economic activity can have the greatest impact."

"SmartPower brings the trusted community relationships, consumer-engagement and customer-origination capability needed to reach thousands - and ultimately millions - of households," said Brian F. Keane, President of PowerSmart and Founder and President of SmartPower. "Combined with PowerSmart's member benefits, we create a compelling reason to say yes: a fully installed battery at no upfront cost, backup power, electricity-bill savings, participation in a clean-energy Virtual Power Plant, ongoing aftercare, and, for each participating low-income homeowner, $100 annually deposited into a personal long-term account. That is how we turn individual household batteries into energy infrastructure at scale."

PowerSmart is now assembling the capital, community partnerships and deployment infrastructure required to begin its planned 1,000-battery Bridgeport portfolio. The company expects to announce additional details about local partnerships, customer eligibility, enrollment and the deployment timetable as those elements are finalized.

Over time, PowerSmart also intends to incorporate artificial intelligence and portfolio data to improve site selection, customer acquisition, battery performance, VPP revenues and market-expansion decisions. This planned "PowerSmart Intelligence" will use AI to help deploy and optimize the distributed energy resources needed to address electricity demand growth—including demand associated with AI-driven data centers.

“Bridgeport is where we’re demonstrating that virtual power plants can strengthen the grid while directing meaningful investment and tangible benefits into underserved communities,” Kiner concluded. “That is the model PowerSmart is launching, and the company we are scaling across the country.”

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