

1,199 sitios in Central Luzon all lighted up



President Benigno S. Aquino III leads the ceremonial switch-on of Sitio Electrification Projects in Central Luzon at Neeco II-Area 1 Headquarters in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. With the President are (from L) DILG Secretary Senen Sarmiento, DOE Undersecretary Donato Marcos, DENR Secretary Ramon Paje, Talavera Mayor Nerivi Martinez, NEA Administrator Edita Bueno, and Nueva Ecija Governor Aurelio Umali.

All the 1,199 sitios in Central Luzon are now electrified under the Sitio Electrification Program (SEP) through the joint effort of NEA and the 13 electric cooperatives (ECs) in the region.

President Benigno S. Aquino III led the ceremonial switch-on of the electrified sitios at the Neeco II-Area 1 Headquarters in Talavera, Nueva Ecija on February 24, 2016. He said, "Itong Sitio Electrification Program po, bahagi lang ng malawakan nating estratehiya upang bigyang liwanag ang kinabukasan ang ating mga Boss."

The President commended the Department of Energy and NEA for being on track in electrifying the 32,441 sitios nationwide identified in 2011.

As of 23 February 2016, 31,864 sitios have already been electrified with the remaining 577 expected to be lighted up by March this year.

He said, "Kaya ganoon na lang po ang paghanga natin sa DOE at NEA nang ibalita sa atin: Yung dating estimate na halos P1 milyon kada sitio, dahil tapat at tamang proseso, ay napababa natin sa humigit-kumulang P600,000 na lang. Umabot ng halos P400,000 po ang natipid natin dyan kada sitio. Patunay itong Daang Matuwid, imbes na maibulsa ang pondo, diretso ito sa mga programang naghahatid ng benepisyo sa ating mga Boss."

Under the Aquino Presidency, the Rural Electrification Program has received an unprecedented financial support. From

NEA showcases solar power initiative

In line with the government's thrust of promoting the use of renewables, NEA has initiated the installation of the 22 kwp solar photovoltaic (PV) facility on its rooftop to cover part of its power requirements.

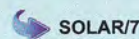
annual savings from this project, and we hope the ECs would soon pick up momentum to adopt clean energy technologies and contribute to our efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change," she said.

In a switch-on ceremony held last February 9, NEA Administrator Edita S. Bueno said that "the newly-installed solar PV system of the Agency is envisioned to be a showcase initiative for electric cooperatives (ECs) wishing to do green venture projects in the near future."

The 22 kwp solar panel installation of the NEA is in addition to its 5 kwp solar facility which was inaugurated last December 1, 2015.

For this project, NEA partnered with Adon Renewables Philippines, Inc. which has agreed to a 15-year cooperation period, after which the

"We are expecting roughly P300,000



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NEA goes on 'green' campaign for Bicol ECs

Bicol electric cooperatives (ECs) find support anew from the NEA following move from the Agency to assist 11 ECs in the region in crafting their updated Operation Improvement Plans (OIPs).

In a roundtable assessment held in Legazpi City, Albay from January 13 to 14, NEA gathered all ECs in the region to specifically help them in developing "a concrete and a more comprehensive OIP" that will target challenges in the operations of the ECs and lay down the groundwork for a more stable power situation in Bicol.

"As an Agency mandated to make electric cooperatives more competitive and operationally-reliant, NEA has to ensure that challenges of the coops are addressed decisively through a concrete and actionable



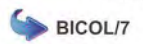
NEA officials led by Administrator Edita Bueno, Board Members Fr. Jose Victor Lobrigo and Victor Chiong, and Deputy Administrators Edgardo Piamonte and Atty. Rossan Rosero-Lee preside over discussions on improving the operational status of electric cooperatives in Bicol Region. Through the coops' updated Operation Improvement Plan (OIP), the Agency is hoping that they will be able to operationalize a roadmap for their eventual graduation to green status.

OIP and with a clear vision of what we want to accomplish—and that is providing the best quality of electric service to our member-consumers," NEA Administrator Edita Bueno said.

An OIP is a document submitted by a coop within its one-year recovery

period, through which it expects to mitigate its operational and financial difficulties.

An OIP covers Debt Repayment Plan, Capital Expenditures Plan, Operating Expenditures Plan,



Officials and employees of the Nueva Ecija II-Area 1 Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Neeco II-Area 1) pose for photo opportunity with NEA Administrator Edita Bueno (in red) and NEA Deputy Administrator Edgardo Piamonte (in blue) during the ceremonial switch-on of 1,199 Central Luzon sitios energized under the Sitio Electrification Program. During the ceremony, President Benigno S. Aquino III lauded NEA for effectively reducing the cost of energizing a sitio and being on track in accomplishing its target.

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2011 to 2016, NEA received Php 30.93 billion total subsidy from the national government, which also included calamity grant, of which Php 20.048 billion was earmarked for SEP.

In Central Luzon, Php 1.873 billion was allotted for the energization of the 1,199 sitios which will benefit an initial of 15,666 household connections.

Of the 13 ECs in the region, Tarelco I energized the most sitios with 398. Meanwhile, Aurelco electrified 266; Tarelco II, 67; Neeco I, 71; Neeco II-Area 1, 121; Neeco II-Area 2, 80; Presco, 4; Pelco I, 45; Pelco II, 16; Pelco III, 3; Penelco, 44; Zameco I, 57; and Zameco II, 27.

Among the highlights of the ceremony was a testimony given by beneficiary Jaime Cariaga, Jr. of Sitio Ilog Baliwag, Brgy. Sto. Rosario, Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija.

Pres. Aquino lauds DOE, NEA Sitio Electrification Program



President Benigno S. Aquino III leads the ceremonial switch-on for the 3,618 Panay sitios energized under the Sitio Electrification Program. Joining the President on stage are (from left) DOE Secretary Zenaida Y. Monsada, Iloilo Governor Arthur Defensor, Sr., NEA Deputy Administrator Edgardo R. Piamonte, and other Cabinet officials.

President Benigno S. Aquino III lauded during the ceremonial switch-on of “3,618 Panay Island Sitio Energization Program” (SEP) the sustained efforts of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Electrification Administration (NEA) in providing electricity to far-flung sitios in the country.

In a ceremony held in Pavia, Iloilo last February 10, President Aquino said that with 31,548 sitios already lit up as of January 31 this year, the achievement of DOE and NEA remains to be unprecedented in the history of rural electrification.

“Sa pagpapakitang-gilas nga ng ating Department of Energy at National Electrification Administration, naghatid na tayo ng liwanag sa 31,548 sitiong natukoy sa imbentaryo mula noong taong 2011,” he said.

President Aquino was referring to the nationwide inventory drawn up by NEA in 2011 which identified

32,441 sitios as then unenergized, and which the Agency vowed to electrify before President Aquino steps down in June 2016.

In the latest report released by the Agency, only 893 sitios have yet to be connected to the grid as of January 2016, which brings the sitio energization level to 97%.

NEA added that for Western Visayas alone, 3,618 sitios have already been provided electricity, surpassing the 2,509 sitios energized before Aquino became president.

“Dito ho sa inyo sa Panay Island, hindi rin kayo pinabayaan. Ito pong 3,618 sitios na ating napailawan, ay nalampasan na ang 2,509 na sitiong nabigyan ng kuryente ng nakaraang mga administrasyon sa loob ng 13 taon,” President Aquino said.

The President added, “Inaasahan natin, bago tayo bumaba sa puwesto, lahat ng naitala noong taong 2011, hindi lang po sa Panay, pero sa buong Pilipinas, energized na po.”

Meanwhile, NEA Administrator Edita Bueno expressed her gratitude to President Aquino for being a staunch supporter of the SEP. She said, “In no history of NEA has there been so much subsidy funds entrusted to the Agency by a single president. The Aquino Administration has so far released PhP 29.9 billion subsidy assistance to NEA to implement SEP and other RE programs.”

Administrator Bueno said she is hoping that “through the SEP, more and more rural areas will play an increased role in creating a competitive, investor-friendly, and thriving countryside, thereby hastening the government’s goal of achieving inclusive growth for all Filipinos.”

She added, “With rural electrification, we hope that we are able to successfully lay down a government platform that truly responds to the clamor of the people.”

“SEP will allow people to be productive given the resources and social services that are now being made available to them through access to electricity,” Administrator Bueno added.

NEA, ECs gear up for last mile SEP implementation

Admtr Bueno expresses optimism about surpassing the target



Former Presidential Adviser on Rural Electrification Fr. Francisco Silva (inset, left) gives his message at the 2016 NEA Strategic Thinking Conference-Workshop, while Administrator Edita Bueno looks on (inset, right). The workshop underscores the strategies the Agency needs to undertake to continue to be responsive to the needs of the electric cooperatives, while strengthening its financial position in the power industry.

Affirming her commitment to make NEA a catalyst of rural development, Administrator Edita Bueno said in the recent Strategic Thinking Conference-Workshop that the Agency is already making headway on its efforts to accomplish the last mile implementation of the Sitio Electrification Program (SEP).

Administrator Bueno reported that with only a few months before the committed completion date of the SEP, NEA has already energized 30,874 sitios, leaving only a balance of 1,567.

This represents 95% accomplishment rate for the SEP which is projected by the Agency to be accomplished by March this year.

The Administrator said, "With the rate the NEA is going, connecting as many as 20 sitios daily, the Agency is optimistic about not only hitting its target, but exceeding it as well."

"Excellence in performance should always be the mode for NEA, as only through this can the future of the Agency be assured. With millions of rural Filipinos depending on quality and reliable electric service, we must always look for opportunities to do better and make our services more responsive to the needs of the people," she added.

According to Administrator Bueno, among the management strategies undertaken by the Agency to expedite SEP implementation include conduct of roundtable consultative conferences with the ECs and roundtable assessment of EC general managers' performance, consultations with the Multi-Sectoral Governance Coalition (MSGC) in drafting corporate plans and program and formulating policies, opening of new credit facilities and enhanced loan packages for the ECs, and firming up of continuing competency programs for EC officials and employees.

She added that policies and guidelines sent to the ECs, among them the guidelines on the request for release of construction funds to ECs and the NEA Administrative Rules of Procedures, are also continuously monitored for compliance and amended if the Agency sees fit.

For the year, NEA, in cooperation with the ECs, is rolling out a program to energize about 16,150 new emerging sitios to prop up the commitment of the Department of Energy (DOE) to attain 90% household electrification by 2017.

The Agency is likewise pursuing an active direction in the utilization of renewable energy to augment power supply in the country and scale up the deployment of clean technologies. One of the first steps undertaken by the NEA in line with this is the installation of solar panels on the Agency's rooftop. (see related news on p. 1)

NEA approves Mindoro coop Power Supply Guarantee

NEA approved the guarantee for the Power Supply Agreement (PSA) for the Occidental Mindoro Electric Cooperative, Inc., Mindoro Geothermal Power Corporation (MGPC), and the Occidental Mindoro Consolidated Power Corporation (OMCPC) to boost power reliability and sustainability in the Mindoro Island.

The PSA Guarantee for OMECO is the first that NEA released under its new charter, R.A. 10531 also known as the "National Electrification Administration Reform Act of 2013."

NEA is mandated to implement the government's rural electrification program and may act as guarantor for the electric cooperatives' power purchase transactions with independent power suppliers.

Administrator Edita S. Bueno said, "NEA is supportive in all endeavors to ensure reliability of power supply for the electric cooperatives to serve better their member-consumers. A stable power supply will redound to better electricity service, more livelihood opportunities and improved quality

of lives for the people of Occidental Mindoro."

In a ceremonial signing held at the NEA head office on January 7, 2016, OMECO Acting President Rodolfo Plopinio expressed their consumers' gratitude to NEA for approving the PSA guarantee, which he says, was the key to ending their electricity woes.

"We have been praying for this for over a year now. We thank the NEA Administrator for understanding how our problems with energy supply has adversely affected the lives of our 65,000 consumers", said Plopinio.

Occidental Mindoro's capital town of San Jose was once dubbed as the "Blackout Capital of the Philippines" due to power outages that last six to 12 hours a day. The entire province has endured power outages over the past few years due to inadequate power supply and disconnection from the main grid.

Insufficient energy supply has not only affected the daily lives of its

consumers, but has also hampered local business activities and slowing economic growth in the province.

OMCPC is constructing a 20-Megawatt (MW) diesel power plant while MGPC, a subsidiary of renewable energy company, Emerging Power, Inc. (EPI), is building a 40-MW Geothermal Power Plant in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

The project is expected to begin commercial operation by 2017 and will be able to supply electricity to more than 250,000 homes in Oriental and Occidental Mindoro.

EPI President Martin Antonio Zamora also thanked NEA for signing the PSA guarantee and vowed that the company will continue to pave the way for more renewable energy projects in the future.

"We fully support initiatives of the private sector, government and electric cooperatives to attain stable and clean energy with lower electricity rates", he added.



NEA seals power supply agreement between the Occidental Mindoro Electric Cooperative, Inc. (OMECO) and generators Mindoro Geothermal Power Corporation (MGPC) and Occidental Mindoro Consolidated Power Corporation (OMCPC). The PSA guarantee for OMECO represents the first guarantee NEA approved under Republic Act 10531, otherwise known as the "National Electrification Administration Reform Act of 2013."



Cobrador Island receives 24/7 power supply



NEA Deputy Administrator Sonia San Diego, NEA Department Managers Judith Alferez and Roderick Padua, and Romelco General Manager Rene Fajilagutan join officials from ADB, Romelco, Korea Energy Agency, and BJ Power of Korea in inspecting the solar panels of the newly-inaugurated solar diesel hybrid project in Cobrador Island.

An island within the coverage area of the Romblon Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Romelco) now stands to benefit from uninterrupted power supply following the inauguration of a solar diesel-hybrid project in the locality last March 3, 2016.

Cobrador Island, famed for its pristine beaches, but whose electric service is limited to only 6 hours a day, secured round-the-clock electricity through the NEA-supported power generation system which made possible hybridizing diesel power plants with renewable energy.

With funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the project is expected to benefit 244 households in the island and improve the living conditions of the people, including their access to health care, education, communication, entertainment, and leisure.

The project “combines a 15 kW diesel generator with 30 kW solar photovoltaic panels, 180 kWh lithium-ion energy storage system, and a 30 kW power control system.” During daytime, the solar panels will

supply the energy requirements of the community, while excess energy will be used to charge the battery system. Power stored in the battery system will then be used to supply electricity come night-time before shifting to diesel generator in cases of capacity shortage.

NEA Deputy Administrator Sonia San Diego said the project affirms the Agency’s commitment to reach out to rural Filipinos as exemplified by its efforts to look for opportunities whereby electric cooperatives (ECs) can enjoy a range of financing options to support their electrification programs.

She added, “I wish other ECs can replicate this project within their coverage area so that more Filipinos in far-flung areas can have access to sustainable power supply. I am thankful to ADB, Romelco, the Korea Energy Agency (KEA), and BJ Power of Korea for supporting this endeavor.”

Meanwhile, Richard Bolt, Country Director of ADB Philippines Office, said “the project captures many

of the principles and priorities for ADB’s energy development efforts” whose aim is to provide sustainable and affordable energy to local communities.

He said the project forms part of its Energy for All initiative that seeks to promote universal energy access by 2030.

Praising the process by which the solar panels were successfully delivered to the island, Bolt hopes that the residents of Cobrador Island would do its share of maintaining the facilities to meet the power requirements of the community on a long term basis.

NEA lights up Gigantes Island

Residents of Isla Gigantes Sur in the province of Iloilo will soon have access to electricity following the inauguration of the Gigantes Island submarine cable project funded thru the Barangay Line Enhancement Program (BLEP).

Backed by NEA and in cooperation with Iloilo III Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Ileco III), the submarine cable project is targeted to be finished by end of May. It will deliver power from Isla Gigantes Norte to more than 1,500 households in Isla Gigantes Sur.

The P32.3 million-project is expected to spur tourism development in the island which is fast gaining international buzz for its white-sand beaches and rich marine life.

At the inauguration ceremony held in Barangay Granada, Carles on March 15, NEA Administrator Edita Bueno said the project aims to give socioeconomic uplift to the residents

Yolanda-stricken coops get new boom trucks

Four electric cooperatives (ECs) devastated by super typhoon Yolanda were given a total of 14 units of brand-new boom trucks by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

In a turn-over ceremony held on January 25 at the regional office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Palo, Leyte, NEA Administrator Edita Bueno said the Agency acted as conduit for the grant of equipment to Don Orestes Romualdez Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Dorelco), Leyte II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Leyeco II), Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Esamelco), and Samar II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Samelco II) to capacitate these coops in their disaster risk reduction and management efforts.

Dorelco, Leyeco II, and Esamelco each received four units of boom trucks, while two were granted to Samelco II.

Administrator Bueno said, "The equipment will aid the coops especially in repair and rehabilitation works, thereby enhancing their response to emergency events and future calamities."

"The boom truck donation cements the commitment of Japan and the Philippines to help each other in times of need. It is my hope that through this grant, our country will have a stronger impetus to advance its disaster management procedures and protocols to help mitigate damages in the aftermath of any emergency situation," she added.

The Administrator noted that the two countries shared experiences in disaster rehabilitation and recovery which continues to be the source of strength of their long-standing partnership.

Meanwhile, JICA's Chief Representative Mr. Noriaki Niwa said the boom truck donation symbolizes Japan's commitment to be a constant ally of the Philippines and help the country build back better.

"Now, it is our turn to give back and share our experience on disaster risk reduction and management... It is our hope that through the provision of the boom trucks and operations training, future emergency work can be expedited," he said.

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units will be owned by the NEA under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) scheme.

The Agency has likewise submitted to the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO) its application for net metering which will allow it to sell excess electricity back to the power grid.

According to Administrator Bueno, efforts of the NEA to promote use of renewables among the ECs started in the creation of the Office for Renewable Energy Development (ORED) in 2013.

Through the office's four pillars of assistance, namely technical, financial, regulatory, and social safeguards, she said that NEA has so far provided assistance to electric coops in terms of project assessment, evaluation of feasibility studies, and onsite validation and inspection of RE projects.

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System Loss Reduction Program, Collection Efficiency Improvement Program, and Manpower Reorganization Plan.

According to Board Member Fr. Jose Victor Lobrigo who was also present during the event, "ECs should maximize all opportunities to create stronger ties with NEA so that they can build on the successes of one another and be excellent institutions serving the needs of the people."

He added that "Region V ECs should strive harder to create sound operational plans that are attuned with the performance standards set by NEA and take to heart the welfare of the majority."



NEA Administrator Edita Bueno (from right), Palo Mayor Remedios Petilla, Leyte Board Member Bob Abellanos, and JICA Chief Representative Noriaki Niwa lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the turn-over of 14 units of boom truck to four electric cooperatives.



NEA recognized as 'active partner' in bottom-up budgeting



The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Region III has recognized the NEA for its active involvement in implementing on-grid sitio electrification projects under the Bottom-Up Budgeting (BuB) Program.

so far completed 239 projects by the end of 2015, with 22 committed projects for 2016.

According to Luisa Hernandez of the Corporate Planning Office, who also acts as NEA's BuB focal person, "the national government has always actively pushed for the electrification of sitios in recognition of the importance of rural development in effecting national reforms."

She said the projects completed under BuB from 2013 to 2015 were selected from 187 focus cities and municipalities, while 32 local government units (LGUs) were deemed eligible to implement BuB on-grid electrification projects for the year.

Meanwhile, NEA Administrator Edita Bueno said "The NEA continues to excel as an implementing agency of the BuB Program, and we hope that through the recognition given by DILG-Region III to the Agency, more people will get to appreciate the lasting gains of electricity as an enabler of basic social services."

In a citation given by Regional Director Florida M. Dijan to the Agency, Director Dijan said that the NEA has been "an active development partner in the pursuit of business friendly and competitive, environment protective, climate change adaptive and disaster resilient, socially protective and safe, as well as transparent, accountable, participative and effective local government units."

Under the BuB Program which began in 2013, NEA has

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of Gigantes Island, while allowing their locality to be a key international tourism destination.

She said, "By energizing your community, we envision this project to generate sustainable economic development in the island. We also hope that visitors, foreign and local alike, will get to visit this place and experience the beauty of our country."

Meanwhile, Iloilo Congressman Niel Tupas, Jr. who was also present during the ceremony said the project affirms the full support of the national government through the NEA in improving the living conditions of the rural people. He said more than P300 million has been poured in by the Aquino administration to electrify the 13 municipalities comprising the coverage area of Iloco III.

"Isla Gigantes will be the center of progress not only of Carles, but also of Northern Iloilo. And we need electrification [to do this]," Congressman Tupas added.

Other local officials who also attended the inauguration were Carles Mayor Siegfredo Betita and Vice Mayor Merle Tupas, Iloco III General Manager Antonio Lazarraga and Board President Vincent Belita, and Congressman Tupas' wife Atty. Angeli Tupas.

According to GM Lazarraga, the National Power Corporation has already granted the request of the coop to have an

additional capacity of 174 kW to secure round-the-clock power operations for the island.

Meanwhile, Administrator Bueno, along with the other officials, also led the ceremonial switch-on of 602 projects accomplished under the Sitio Electrification Program (SEP) and 11 barangays under BLEP.

To finance the coop's SEP projects, NEA has so far given Iloco III P277.2 million in subsidy, while P27.1 million was released for its BLEP projects.



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