

How's Silicon Valley Clean Energy contributing to a greener environment?



By Neelanjana Gautam, September 2016 —

Community Choice Energy (CCE) continues to generate a powerful buzz in Silicon Valley. CCE is expanding and on its way to sweeping the land, much to the delight of Californians who recently voted in favor of alternative energy over oil and gas. Here's a lowdown on Silicon Valley Clean Energy and its green energy initiatives.

Green Future Plans from SVCE

The [Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority](#) (SVCEA) — established in March 2016 as a partnership of 12 local governments — is aiming to bring 100% carbon-free electricity at lower rates to its residents and businesses. If things go according to plan, the operation is likely to begin in 2017.

SVCEA will serve the cities of Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Gilroy, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Saratoga, Sunnyvale, and the unincorporated portions of Santa Clara County starting April 2017.

These communities are excited to offer a new choice for their residents and businesses. During the next few months, outreach efforts will expand to engage communities in the agency's decision-making process.

SVCEA operations blend well with the core values of Sustainable Silicon Valley (SSV). Both organizations are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and advocating the benefits of a green energy mix.

SSV actively supported and promoted SB 32, which expands on Assembly Bill 32 and requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below the 1990 levels by 2030.

[With Governor Jerry Brown signing the historic legislation on September 8](#), SSV received a huge boost to pursue its climate-specific projects.

SVCEA developed its alternative energy model to counter the damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions. Based on a proven model that has successful precedents in Marin Clean Energy, Sonoma Clean Power, and Lancaster Choice Energy, SVCEA is mapping its own goals to address climate change issues.



SVCE Display at the Electric Auto Assn. Yearly Rally

Steps SVCE has laid out to begin offering service:

Spring 2016: Launch SV Clean Energy Authority

Summer 2016: Submit Implementation Plan to California

Fall 2016: Finalize Energy Services Contracts, Ramp-up Operations and Communications

Winter 2017: Set Electricity Rates, Send Notices

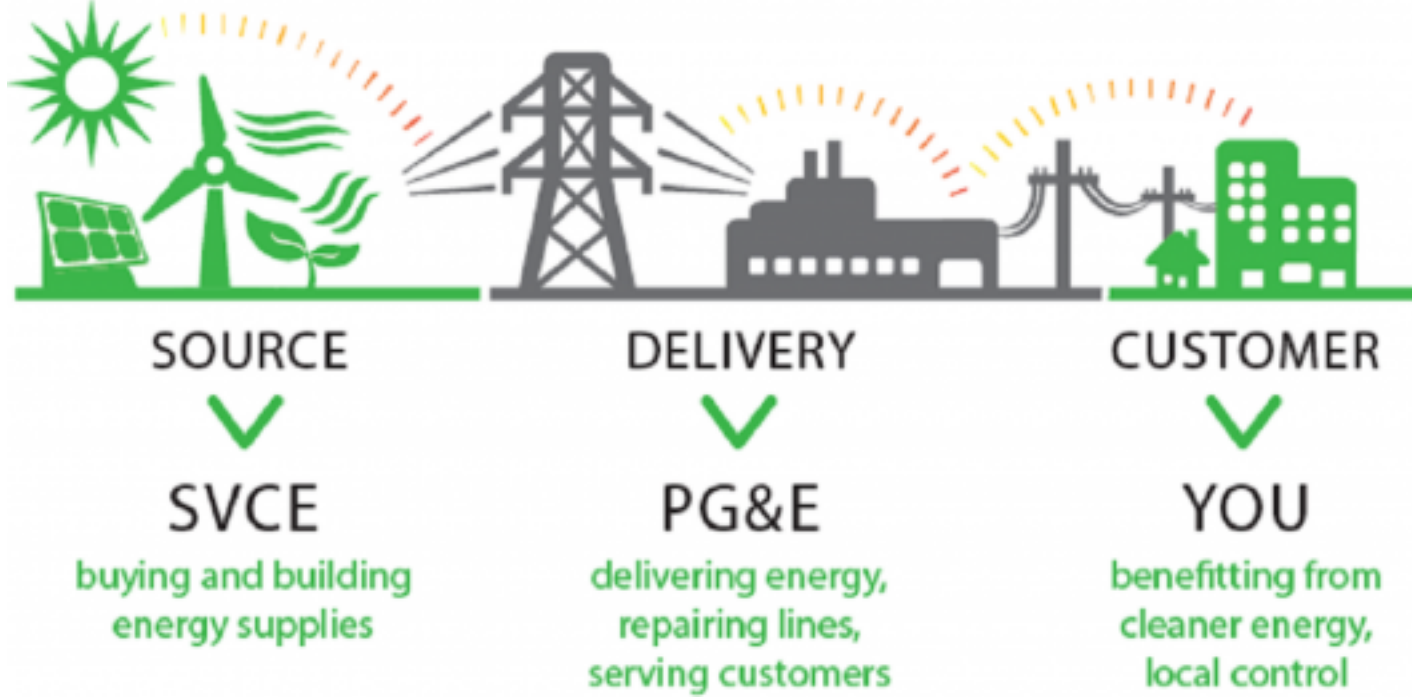
Spring-Fall 2017: Commence Service for Customers



Board Meeting of SVCE

Environmental and Economic Advantages of SVCE

It's common knowledge that the production and burning of traditional energy sources, such as coal and natural gas, releases significant amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) into the atmosphere, leading to disastrous climate change. SVCE strikes here and highlights the need to tap into natural resources like solar — an asset that's abundantly available in sunny California — in addition to water and wind power.



CCE: Generation, Transmission and Distribution. Image Credit: SVCE

Economically, the idea presents a valuable proposition. Building energy facilities and executing local energy projects require skilled labor, which creates job opportunities. Based on widely used industry models, local renewable energy projects could generate up to 11,000 construction jobs and as much as \$1.4 billion in total economic output statewide.

What will SVCE customers' energy bills look like?

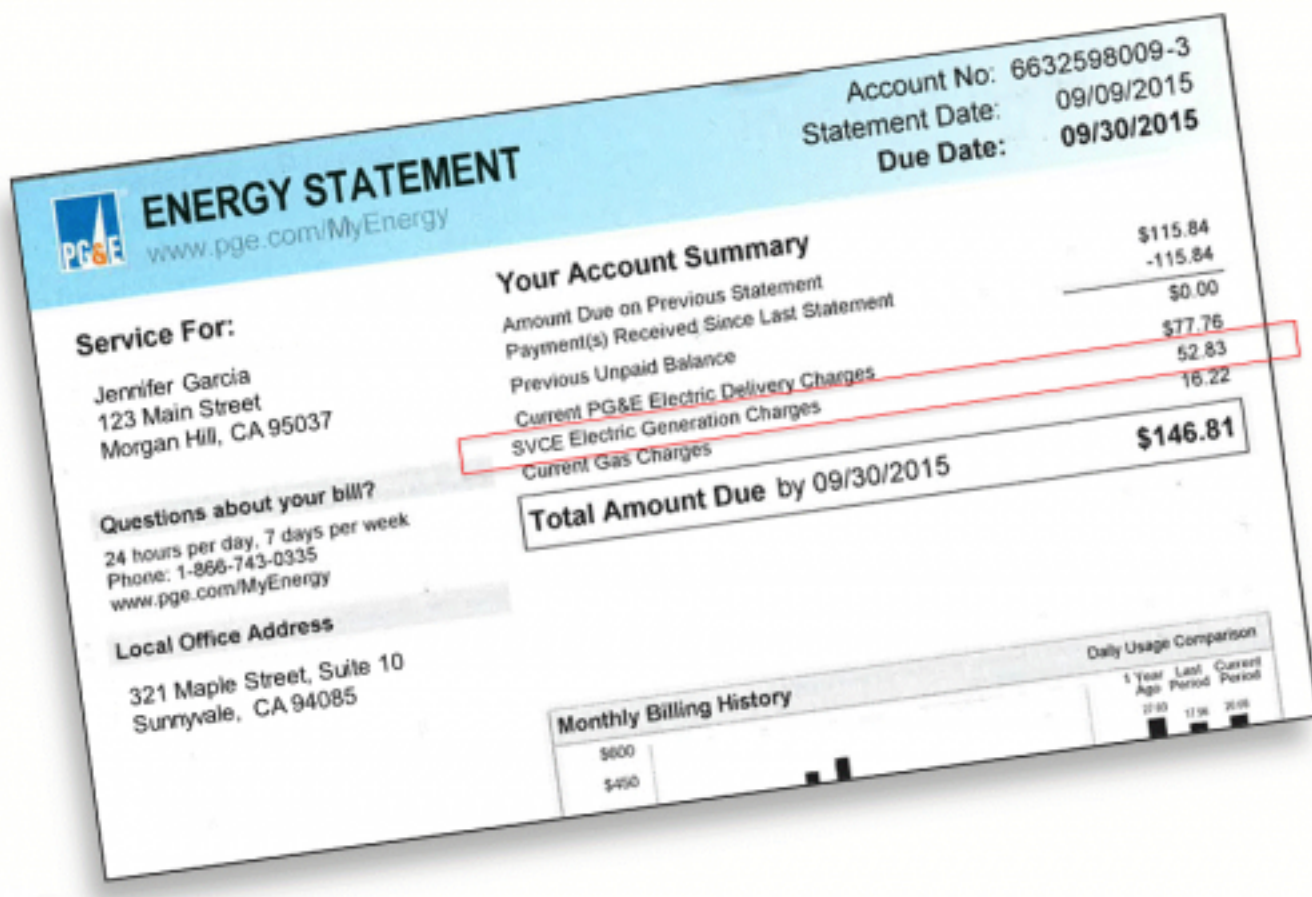


Image Credit: SVCE

The relationship between customers and PG&E doesn't end even if the community enjoys CCE benefits. PG&E is an essential partner for SVCE. Unlike a few agencies that are PG&E-independent, SVCE considers the investor-owned utility a mainstay for maintenance, delivery, and customer service.

The graphic above from an operating CCE in Sonoma County demonstrates what SVCE customers' energy bills will look like. Bills for CCE customers will display the generation charge for their electricity as coming from their local CCE, not PG&E. The generation charge is highlighted above.

How SVCE connects to ESAP

The [City of Mountain View Environmental Sustainability Action Plan](#) encompasses a broader spectrum of environmental sustainability plans, among which reduction of greenhouse gases is a major component.

SVCE provides the foundation for the City's long-term GHG reduction strategy, which involves "decarbonizing" (or greening) the electricity grid through increased use of renewable and carbon-free energy, and then transitioning building energy and transportation/vehicle fuel to electricity. Members of the advocacy group [Carbon Free Mountain View](#) are working to make the city carbon-free and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% in 2025 compared to 2005 levels.



Mountain View City Council during meeting to approve ESAP

The initial power supply mix will comprise 50% renewable power sources and 50% carbon-free large hydroelectric projects, for a total of 100% carbon-free electricity. But these power supply parameters are just the beginning; SVCE will also set aside 1% of its revenue to invest in local renewable energy projects and energy programs, further expanding the climate impact of its offerings.

“We are very excited that the SVCE board took this bold and decisive step toward a greener future for Silicon Valley. The board’s action is a declaration that Silicon Valley will lead in mitigating climate change as it does in many other ways,” said Tom Habashi, SVCE CEO.

Source: [Silicon Valley Clean Energy](#)