St john s energy storage for microgrids

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The competition for the title of "world’s largest virtual power plant" has largely been focused on residential solar-battery systems, like those being deployed by contenders like Australia’s AGL or Vermont’s Green Mountain Power.But according to AMS, formerly known as Advanced Microgrid Solutions, the world’s biggest VPP is already up and running in the form of the 27-megawatt, 142-megawatt-hour fleet of batteries it’s managing today at commercial and industrial sites across the territory of utility Southern California Edison.

On Tuesday, the San Francisco-based startup announced that its systems, installed as part of SCE’s groundbreaking distributed energy resources procurement in 2014, delivered more than 2 gigawatt-hours of grid services over their first year of operations.

That’s a record-breaking performance for a battery-based VPP, according to Manal Yamout, AMS senior vice president of external affairs —not only in terms of the capacity of the project, but in terms of how often it has actually been called up.

Last spring, we covered theunveiling of AMS’ first 11-megawatt, 60-megawatt-hour fleet of batteries located at 21 buildings owned byCalifornia real estate developer Irvine Company, financed and owned by AMS partner Macquarie Capital. This was the first set of installations AMS is developing underits 2014 contract with SCE to deliver50 megawatts of capacityby the end of 2019, to help the utility meet its grid needs in the wake of the closure of the San Onofre nuclear power plant, and the coming closure of once-through-cooled, natural-gas-fired power plants.

Since then, AMS has expanded its fleet within SCE territory to encompass 27 megawatts and 142 megawatt-hours of energy storage capacity at 40 sites, Yamout said. This expanding fleet has delivered in excess of 2 gigawatt-hours of battery power in response to SCE dispatches, including a stretch this fall when it was called on every business day for 64 consecutive days, she noted — a duty cycle that may be unmatched by any other VPP out there, “because most don’t get dispatched at all.”

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