

Who Turned on the Lights?

California City Turns on Lights with a “Microgrid Gap” Solution

Five years ago, Jeanie O’Laughlin, PhD, CPA was the Finance Director for California City overseeing the challenges of growing a city without the proper power infrastructure to support it. California City Council confronted this challenge by passing Resolution Number 11.19.2811 in 2019, authorizing the creation and operation of a municipally owned utility to provide electric services. Though many companies tried to offer piecemeal solutions, the Baker Energy Team was one of the few companies with the creativity, industry partnerships, and tenacity to help address the city’s unique power challenges.

Now, Mayor O’Laughlin, continues to serve her community in a different capacity, she is seeing what was started years ago come to light (pun intended) as the Baker Energy Team has partnered with Instant ON, to help “turn on the lights” and power local California City businesses with customized “Microgrid Gap Solutions” that can create onsite power within 30-45 days!

“Working with the team at Instant ON has been exciting to see how innovative they are in their approach to solve problems and take care of business NOW, not in two years. This is what the city needed, and we are grateful that the Instant ON team has joined us to build this city to what we know it can be,” said Dusty Baker, Found of the Baker Energy Team.

After a couple months of working with the Baker team and learning about the challenges facing businesses in California City, Instant On customized a “Microgrid Gap Solution” to get the power local businesses needed to open and/or expand their operations.

California City’s “Microgrid Gap Solution” comprises onsite turbines, batteries, solar and fuel cells. This no capex, “Energy as a Service,” and scalable solution is custom-tailored to the energy demand of each unique customer. As a customer’s power demand grows, so can the power assets on the property. Each power node builds out the much-needed power infrastructure backbone for the city. As city-wide utility power becomes more available, these “Microgrid Gap” solutions may be transitioned away.



CAPTION: Instant ON Microgrid Gap Solutions in California City leverage on-site turbines, batteries, solar and fuel cells.

“After years of work and re-work, it’s nice to finally see lights being turned on in California City for our businesses that have trusted us in working to get the power they need to build and grow within our city,” said Mayor O’Laughlin after the first lights and power were turned on by Instant ON.

California City has welcomed the cannabis industry for years but lost many potential businesses due to the lack of power and energy infrastructure. The problem has been highlighted for years as the city's power utility providers continued to put off needed upgrades that support the city's desire to attract meaningful growth, estimating that the capacity is years away and that any infrastructure is well beyond that.



CAPTION: Listed from left to right: Dusty Baker, Founder of the Baker Energy Team. Mayor Jeanie O'Laughlin, California City; AJ Perkins, President of Instant ON.

An example of the challenge for businesses to come to California City was made evident when Starbucks decided to open in the city only to be confronted with a month's long battle with the utility to get the power they needed to open a storefront. "We were excited to have Starbucks come to our community, but not so excited to have them go through a battle with the utility to just get the power they needed for a coffee shop," explained O'Laughlin.

"We saw the need when the Baker team approached us, and we knew we couldn't take years to get them power. We decided to deal with the immediate needs and to get these businesses power and from there we can develop a long-term plan with the city and local utilities to help California City achieve their growth plans," said AJ Perkins, President, Instant ON.

With the Instant ON Microgrid Gap Solution, California City businesses can make a reservation and receive on-site power within 30-45 days by registering at www.californiacitypower.com. Customers need not worry about maintenance, risk, or up-front cost; just a simple payment based on the kWh used. Most importantly, through this model, businesses no longer need to worry about delayed interconnection, insufficient amperage, or power interruptions such as Public Safety Public Shutoffs. Businesses with Microgrids will always have the power they need for where they need it most.



CAPTION: Before the Instant ON Microgrid Gap Solution replaced these three diesel generators.

“I was the first one to get power in California City from Instant ON and it and been smooth. They have been great to deal with and they know their stuff. They take care of my energy while I just focus on growing my business,” explained Curtis Zheng, a local business owner in California City. “I was most excited to replace the three diesel generators I was running with their microgrid which takes up less space, is quieter, and requires no need for maintenance. This was a no-brainer for me.”



CAPTION: After the Instant ON Microgrid Gap Solution replaced three diesel generators with a single unit, freeing up valuable space, eliminating dangerous exhaust fumes, and making the area more presentable.

To date there are about 3MW's of power installed in California City to turn on lights, another 10MW will come online powering facilities by the summer of 2022 with more than 250MW of power requested by California City businesses. By the numbers, it is starting to look like California City has finally overcome its biggest obstacle impeding business growth – lack of power.

“Seeing businesses get the power they need without having to run diesel generators is what we have been hoping for. We care about our environment, and this is the right step. We can now continue to focus our efforts on attracting businesses and families to help us grow our community,” concluded Mayor O’Laughlin.

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