



Center for Economic Development
and Business Research

BARTON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary

The Rainbow Springs Solar Project is a planned 225-megawatt solar energy facility located in Cherokee County, Kansas, with construction scheduled to commence in 2028. This project brings significant economic opportunities for both the local economy and county government. This proposed energy generation facility is designed to meet the growing energy demand within Southeast Kansas and Southwest Missouri. Following the construction phase, the facility's operations will continue to provide ongoing economic benefits to the region for decades. To evaluate these benefits, the Center for Economic Development and Business Research at Wichita State University conducted an economic impact analysis.

The project's economic benefits to the region can be grouped into two categories:

- (1) Economic Boost to the Local Economy**
- (2) Direct Financial Gain for Local Government**

Economic Boost to the Local Economy

The construction (1 year) and long-term operation of the facility (modeled over the first 20 years of operation) will generate significant economic activity in the region:

Construction Phase

The total economic impact is estimated at **\$531.5 million**, supporting **567 jobs** (300 directly on-site and 267 indirectly through suppliers and local spending). Local businesses, including contractors, equipment suppliers, restaurants, and service providers, will benefit from the ripple effects of this investment.

Operations Phase (Annual Impact over 20 years)

Once completed, the facility is expected to generate **\$50.8 million per year** in economic activity and support **66 ongoing jobs** (8 directly). **The value added during operations is approximately \$8.3 million annually.**

Financial Gain for Local Government

Beyond economic activity, the project will generate direct revenue for the Cherokee County government and other local taxing authorities.

Additional tax revenues will be generated through increased business activity, property taxes, and household spending. Over a **10-year period**, the county is projected to have a **net financial gain of \$6.67 million**. Over **20 years**, that figure grows to a total of **\$28.15 million**. For School District 493 Columbus, the 10-year benefit is \$5.7 million, and the 20-year net benefit is **\$18.17 million**. These funds can support key local needs, such as schools, roads, and other infrastructure, as well as emergency services and other community priorities.

Separately, a **Contribution Agreement** from the project developer to Cherokee County will provide an average of **\$504,000 per year for the first 10 years**, totaling more than **\$5 million** in direct cash payments to Cherokee County Government. Due to a state law that grants a 10-year tax abatement for new solar-generating facilities, this voluntary contribution agreement provides a significant economic benefit for the county. Together with the estimated

fiscal cash flow from property taxes (after year 10) and sales taxes, Cherokee County is estimated to gain over **\$38 million in new revenue** due to Rainbow Springs Solar.

The Rainbow Springs Solar Project brings both immediate and long-term value to Cherokee County. It creates jobs, strengthens the regional economy, and delivers direct revenue to the county government. The impact will be seen across the economy, with businesses, households, and the government each seeing additional stimulation as a result of this project. Businesses supporting the supply chain will see substantial contributions during both the construction and operations phases of the project.

The Rainbow Springs Solar Project is more than just an energy generation facility. It brings **new jobs, local business growth and steady new revenue for Cherokee County** and its residents.