

News



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Southern Company demonstrates technology designed to reduce fly ash emissions from coal-fired power plants

ATLANTA – Southern Company today announced that it has successfully completed initial testing and evaluation of a technology designed to reduce fly ash emissions from power plants.

The tests of the Indigo Bi-Polar Fine Particulate Agglomerator, an Australian-developed technology, were conducted at Plant Watson in Gulfport, Mississippi, which is owned and operated by the company's Mississippi Power subsidiary.

“This technology shows great promise in reducing fly ash emissions,” said Charles Goodman, Southern Company senior vice president of research and environmental policy. “This is a significant new development in a maturing field, and we are encouraged by the results.”

Demonstration of the Bi-Polar Fine Particulate Agglomerator device is part of Southern Company's ongoing commitment to research and develop environmental control technologies that will reduce the impact of its operations on the environment.

In 2003, Plant Watson Unit 4, a 250-megawatt coal-fired electric generating unit, was the first site in the U.S. to install the Indigo agglomerator technology for testing on U.S. fuels. Extensive testing was completed on five coals; two domestic (Colorado and Illinois Basin) and three South American coals. All but one of the coals demonstrated significant results with fly ash emissions reduced, on average, 50%.

The Indigo agglomerator is installed in front an existing unit's electrostatic precipitator. It charges half the fly ash particles passing through with a positive electrical charge, and

the other half with a negative electrical charge. These oppositely charged particles are then carefully mixed to insure intimate contact. Once contact is made, the fly ash particles stick together and agglomerate into much larger particles. The large particles are then more easily collected by the existing electrostatic precipitator.

“We’ve installed high efficiency electrostatic precipitators at all of our coal-fired power plants, which remove on average 99.5% of emissions of larger fly ash particles,” added Goodman. “If the Indigo technology continues to perform well at our plants, it will allow us to have an even greater impact on the total amount of fly ash particles that are captured and not released into the environment.”

This fall, Southern Company will install the second Indigo agglomerator in the U.S., and conduct further testing of the technology at Plant Hammond Unit 3, a 115 MW unit, owned and operated by the company’s Georgia Power subsidiary, near Rome. The installation at Plant Hammond will be on a vertical plant configuration versus the horizontal configuration at Plant Watson. This design change from vertical to horizontal will allow the company to evaluate the operation of the technology for application on additional plants within the Southern Company system.

With more than 4 million customers and nearly 39,000 megawatts of generating capacity, Atlanta-based Southern Company (NYSE: SO) is the premier super-regional energy company in the Southeast and a leading U.S. producer of electricity. Southern Company owns electric utilities in four states, a growing competitive generation company, an energy services business and a competitive retail natural gas business, as well as fiber optics and wireless communications. Southern Company brands are known for excellent customer service, high reliability and retail electric prices that are 15 percent below the national average. Southern Company has been named three consecutive years No. 1 on Fortune magazine’s “America’s Most Admired Companies” list in the Electric and Gas Utility industry. Southern Company has been ranked the nation’s top energy utility in the American Customer Satisfaction Index five years in a row. Southern Company has more than 500,000 shareholders, making its common stock one of the most widely held in the United States. Visit the Southern Company Web site at www.southerncompany.com.

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