

Pigeon Key, FL

A historical island steps toward the future with solar energy.



PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Project Type:

Ground-mounted solar system

Location:

Pigeon Key, Florida (off Marathon, FL)

Partner:

SALT Service

Installed:

Fall 2012

Project Size:

24 kW

Applications:

- Conext™ XW Inverter/Chargers (three total)
- MPPT 80 600 (five total)
- Communications Gateway
- Automatic Generator Start

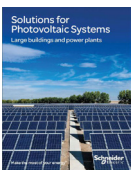


Pigeon Key, FL is a five-acre island located in sight of the Overseas Highway (U.S. 1) which stretches 127 miles through the Florida Keys. There is a historical museum and other buildings on the island, managed by the Pigeon Key Foundation. These buildings ran on a 70 kW diesel generator which ran 24 hours a day and consumed 11,000 gallons of fuel each year, all of which was delivered via ferry.

The Foundation had been seeking alternative power sources for several years to eliminate the extensive operation and maintenance demands of the generator. In 2011, the Monroe County Tourist Development Council awarded a grant and the Foundation contracted with SALT Service for the off-grid solar system.

SALT Service was required to take special considerations when designing and installing this system. For one, all excavation needed to be supervised by volunteer archaeologists who monitored the dig site for any historical artifacts — Pigeon Key was home to 400 workers in the early 1900s who constructed the Overseas Railroad (today the Overseas Highway). Designing the project also required implementing safeguards against hurricanes and ocean air corrosion effects.

SALT evaluated several electrical products for this off-grid installation, deciding on a system consisting of five MPPT 80 600 Solar Charge Controllers, three Conext XW Inverter/Chargers, and an Automatic Generator Start. As explained by Bob Williams, licensed Florida solar contractor for SALT Service, “ultimately, we decided that the Schneider Electric™ equipment provided the best interface for the Automatic Generator Start function while gleaming maximum input power from the solar. Schneider Electric technical support has been very responsive from the design stages through the commissioning of this system. We have been using Schneider Electric (formerly Xantrex™) chargers, controllers, and inverters for over 30 years for our marine customers with great long-term results. We have remote island installations that are still operating with great reliability.”



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