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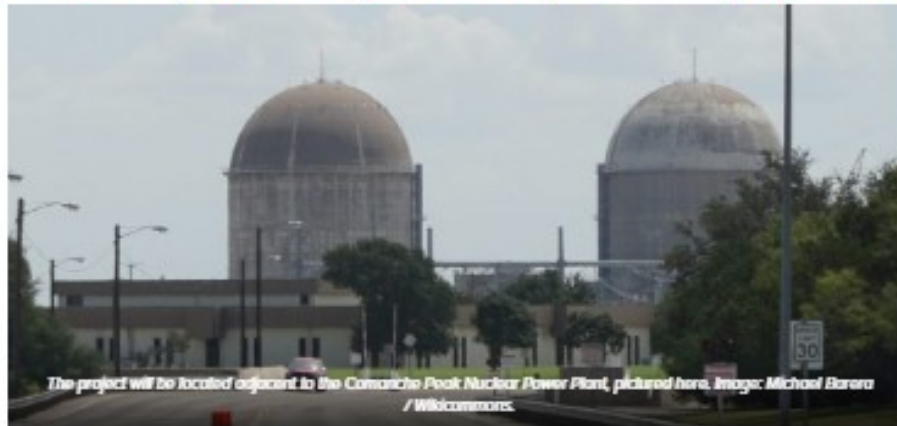
Developer Black Mountain sells 200MW ERCOT BESS to woman-owned IPP Vitis

By Cameron Murray

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The project will be located adjacent to the Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant, pictured here. Image: Michael Barera / Wikimedia

IPP Vitis Energy has acquired a 200MW BESS project in the ERCOT, Texas market from developer Black Mountain Energy Storage (BMES).

The Apache Hill BESS project is located adjacent to the 2.4GW Comanche Peak nuclear power plant in Hood County, the second-largest generating unit in Texas.

Construction on the BESS should start immediately with commercial operations expected to begin in late 2026.

Duncan, VP of BMES said: "The Apache Hill project offers Vitis a unique opportunity to expedite its time to market via an advanced development project located at an advantaged position within the ERCOT system. Our teams worked seamlessly throughout the execution process, and we look forward to seeing the project support Texas' reliable provision of electricity amidst an era of unprecedented demand growth."

Stephanie Clarkson, CEO of Vitis Energy added: "With ERCOT's dynamic landscape, making sure projects are in optimal locations is critical to ensuring grid reliability and the long-term success of a project."

Vitis Energy is an independent power producer (IPP) formed in 2022, certified as a women's business enterprise by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council in 2022, meaning it is at least 51% owned by one or more women actively involved in management. Most BESS IPPs in the ERCOT market are institutionally owned or male-led.

Black Mountain Energy Storage (BMES) was founded in 2021 but has become one of the most active BESS developers in Texas, where the grid operator is the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT).

The ERCOT market is the second-largest for grid-scale BESS in the US after California but is likely to have nearly 10GW online by October 2024. BESS investors are capitalising on some of the highest price spreads in the world and a huge ancillary services market, with ERCOT's lack of interconnection with other parts of the US making it effectively an island grid.

In the last two years, BMES sold a 700MW portfolio to banking group UBS, 400MW/600MWh to developer Cypress Creek Renewables and 490MW to Peregrine Energy Solutions, all in ERCOT. In project development news, it secured approval for a 1.4GWh project in Wisconsin a year ago though it suffered a setback for a 240MWh project in Texas in July 2024 after a frosty reception from local stakeholders ([Premium access](#)).