



Solar Washington Newsletter

WINTER 2008-2009

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News Briefly Noted

- ☼ Snohomish PUD is exploring the possibility of a major solar PV installation over the long-closed Cathcart landfill. Details have not been announced.
- ☼ A Portland General Electric (PGE) 1.1 MW, 329,000 sq. ft. thin film rooftop solar PV array was scheduled to be on line last month.
- ☼ Outback Power Systems has been operating a recently announced sales and distribution center in Barcelona, Spain for about a year. A question heard privately: Why does Outback not manufacture a "Grown in Washington" inverter for grid-connected service?
- ☼ At least two serious proposals, one in Florida and one in California, have been advanced for systems of FIT (feed-in tariffs) similar to that used successfully in Germany to share the up-front cost of solar power.
- ☼ Oregon will soon have the World's largest wind farm. The Oregon Energy Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) recently approved the 990 MWp, (Continued on Page 2)

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- ☼ PSE Starts 500 kWp Solar PV Plant
- ☼ NREL Tests Small Wind Turbines
- ☼ ASES Contracting of Find Solar Data Angers Installers

Certification Delayed, Silicon Energy Schedule "Unknown"

Problems in the certification of Silicon Energy "Grown in Washington" PV modules, both in a small ETL testing laboratory and at the production plant, have resulted in a delay in the program and a presently unknown production go-ahead date, according to Silicon Energy Director of Operations Gary Shaver and Mike Farrell of Marketing and Sales Support

"We are working very hard to minimize the delay and cost of certifying our modules to the requirements of UL Standard 1703 and unfortunately, rather than put out uncertain leads we must say that our production date is unknown at the time," Shaver said. During an extended interview with Shaver and Farrell, a small crew was putting final touches to the semi-automated production line in a spotless 8000 sq. ft. bay in the Outback Power Systems complex in Arlington.

PSE Starts Largest Northwest Solar Installation

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) of Bellevue has engaged San Rafael, California-based EI Solutions to build a \$3.7 million, 500 kWp solar power plant at its Wild Horse wind farm near Ellensburg. The design is presently under review by Blue Oak Energy of Davis, California to assure adequacy of the module/mount assembly to withstand the occasional 120 mph winds at the site.

Construction is scheduled to begin in June, with most of the 2500 PV modules to be in operation before the end of 2009. About ten percent of them will be the Silicon Energy "Grown in Washington" modules, their first commercial installation. Most of the modules will be mounted in an abandoned quarry site at an elevation of 3800 ft., above typical local fog and clouds, with a sun-year similar to that of Houston, TX.

Two NREL Small Wind Tests Complete; Others Planned

National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has completed cooperative research and development testing on the Southwest Windpower Skystream 3.7 and the Endurance Windpower S-2500B small wind turbines. Testing of the Northern Power Systems 100B is continuing. Turbines from Abundant Renewable Energy (ARRE), Entegry, Gala Wind and Mariah Power are scheduled to enter the test program this year.

The turbines are tested for total life, performance, noise, safety and function requirements of the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) applicable to small wind turbines, i.e., those with rated power of 100 kW or less. Under terms of the cooperative contracts, test results may be divulged by the manufacturer, but not by NREL. Reference: Trudy_Forsyth@nrel.gov

Membership Manager Appointed

Brian Allen has been appointed to the new position of Solar Washington Membership Manager. Primary duties for the paid six-month assignment are to update and improve our membership database, streamline procedures for membership applications and renewals, and to improve coordination with our sub-chapters and the American Solar Energy Society.

Brian brings to Solar WA an impressive background in education and renewable energy-related experience. He lives in West Seattle and may be reached at membership@solarwashington.org.

Briefly Noted (cont.)

303-turbine Shepherds Flat wind farm near Arlington on the Columbia River.

☼ Hawaii is going for 40 percent of its power from renewables by 2030, to include wind energy from Maui via undersea cables.

☼ Grays Harbor (WA) Ocean Energy has developed a combination offshore wind/wave power generation system and has applied to FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) for permits for sites in six states.

☼ A California study shows that an investment of 60 billion dollars will be needed between 2010 and 2020 for generation and transmission facilities to reach the state's goal of one-third of its power from renewables.

☼ Puget Sound Energy (PSE) has issued an RFP (Request for Proposal) for up to five schools to each receive a 1.1 kWp solar array or small wind turbine. Contact: Heather Mulligan at PSE.

☼ Puget Sound Solar has installed a 9 kWp solar PV array at the Evergreen State College Library in Olympia.

We're Solar Washington

A state chapter of the American Solar Energy Society and a private, not-for-profit association of people and organizations interested in solar power, energy efficiency, and energy generated using renewable resources.

Our Annual Meeting will be on March 16th. See our Website for more info.

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ASES Contracting of Find Solar Data Angers Installers

The release of its Find Solar website by non-profit ASES under contract to for-profit Cooler Planet of Seattle has angered Solar Washington installer-members and many other prominent dealer-installers throughout the state.

ASES says that the end of government support of the Find Solar site made the change to a fee-sharing contract necessary.

The result is that a formerly free service providing the public information on nearby installers has become one in which "featured" installers pay a fee for each referral from a rolling "budget" deposited by the installer with Cooler Planet.

The national "Featured Listings" on the Cooler Planet website now include 129 residential and 125 commercial installers of solar PV or thermal systems, many on both listings. Of these, only two are from Washington. A full page of information is provided with each "featured" listing.

One Solar Washington member is reported to have negotiated a provision that installers who do not pay Cooler Planet will be listed as "other installers" with limited identification. That change has apparently not yet been made by press time.

Listings of installers in each of several states are included on the Cooler Planet website. Washington is not among them.

Release of the installer business information to Cooler Planet, allegedly without the members' prior knowledge or assent, has triggered suggestions ranging from Solar Washington withdrawing from ASES, filing a protest with the state attorney general, or attempting to have ASES directors modify or reverse the policy.

Members are concerned about the ethics and integrity of the Cooler Planet service: how the \$59 to \$189 fee per referral is assigned, the possibility of favoritism and the number of installers identified in response to inquiries from the public.

The Solar Washington Board has taken no action, and the matter is likely to be taken up at the March 16 Solar Washington general meeting. In the meantime, a special meeting of installers is being planned. Watch our website for further information.

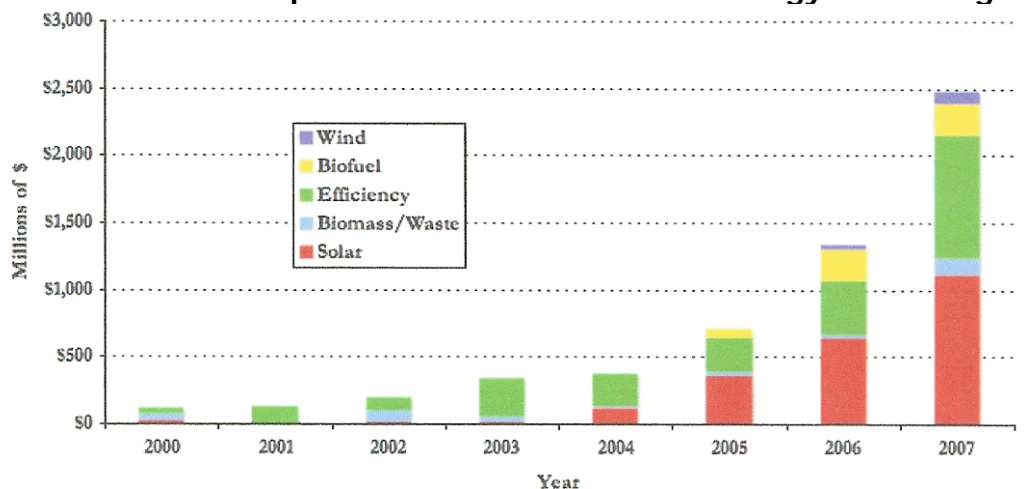
Solar Washington People on the Move

Chris Herman has been appointed to the newly-defined position of Senior Program Manager, Solar and Emerging Technologies, Snohomish County PUD. He will be responsible for planning a program of incentives, low interest loans and rebates for solar PV and water heating systems for both residential and commercial customers. Board member and attorney Jason Keyes co-founder Keyes and Fox, LLP, to represent the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) in state rulemakings regarding net metering and interconnection procedures. Board Member Joelle Robinson has returned to Climate Solutions where she is Field Director responsible for government contracts.

NREL Reports Growth of Investments in Renewable Energy

The graph below shows the remarkable growth of venture capital financing of private firms engaged in various aspects of renewable energy since 2000. It is taken from Technical Report NREL/TP-6A2-43602, Jennings, Margolis and Barlett, "A Historical Analysis of Investments in Solar Energy Technologies (2000-2007)."

Global Venture Capital Investments in Clean Energy Technologies



Source: NEF / NREL / FACC