Green Power and Market Research News

A free weekly news service from Western's Renewable Resource Program covering green power, renewable energy and market research strategies provided for educational purposes.

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Public Renewables Partnership

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Week of January 31, 2011

Green Power

Green Power Partnership helps cities choose their shade of green

As local governments continue to pursue ways to reduce their carbon footprints, many turn to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Power Partnership (GPP) for advice on choosing the most suitable renewable energy options for their operations. In some cases, direct green power purchases are inaccessible or insufficient, so cities and counties are choosing to support alternative energy through Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). Read more. *Source: American City & County, 1/12/11*

The Green Power Network Monthly Update — December 2010

This update summarizes recent green power marketing activity, including news and information on competitive green power marketing, utility green pricing programs, renewable energy certificates, green power purchasing, and related market activity. Additional information on green power markets and products, as well as links to the companies mentioned in the stories, can be found on the U.S. Department of Energy's Green Power Network website.

- Announcements
  - New Section Added - On-site Generation
- Utility Green Pricing
  - Maine PUC Issues RFP for Green Power Standard Offer
- Green Power Marketing
  - BlueStar Energy to Offer Green Product in PA
- Green Power Purchases
  - Chevrolet Pledges $40 Million to Reduce Carbon
  - InterContinental New York Barclay Hotel Purchases 100 percent Wind
- On-site Generation
  - San Diego Government Entities Purchase 4.5 MW of Fuel Cells

    - Santee Cooper Builds 331 kW of Solar Using Green Power Funds
    - Castle Rock Vineyard Installs 1.1 MW Solar
- Renewable Energy RFPs
    - Minnesota Power
    - SRECTrade Monthly SREC Auction
    - Entergy Services, Inc.
    - University of Utah
    - California Department of Water Resources
    - Holy Cross Energy
    - Southern California Public Power Authority
    - Detroit Edison

Source: Green Power News Network, 1/5/11

Green Power Planet Newsletter

In this edition of the *Green Power Planet*:

- Green Power Partnership Hits 1,300th Partner Milestone
- Reminder: GPP Purchase Requirement Changes, Revised "New" Requirement
- GPP Featured in Newsweek's Green Rankings Issue; 2011 Advertising Supplement Opportunity
- Green Power Community Challenge Rankings Updated
    - March GPC Challenge Update Reminder
- GPP Recognizes 18 Partners with Green Power Leadership Awards
- GPP Releases Discussion Draft on the Environmental Value of Purchasing RECs
- November Top Partner Rankings
    - January Top Partner List Update Reminder
- GPP: A Year In Review
- Partner Spotlight – Philadelphia Eagles
- College & University Challenge Rankings Updated
    - January College & University Challenge Update Reminder
- Report Studies Use of Green Power by ACUPCC Signatories
- NREL Releases 2009 Green Power Markets Status Report

Read more. *Source: U.S. EPA Green Power Partnership, 12/17/10*

Visit U.S. DOE EERE Green Power Network for more information.

Renewable Energy Technologies

Advanced Smart Grid Will be Energy Internet

During any week this year, you could find a smart grid conference, and you wouldn't have to look hard. There is no shortage of discussion on smart grid whether it's online, at a conference or in the office. But for all the talk about fixing the grid, upgrading the grid and adding to the grid, when the discussion begins with the applications or tools

that will define the solution (such as an AMI project), as it often does, that discussion jumps ahead of itself. A smart grid project must start with decisions on the network design or face the risk of the application decisions' limiting the network options needed to meet future needs, plus raising the complexity, cost and overall risk of the smart grid project. Read more. *Source: Electric Light & Power, 1/20/11*

New Geothermal discovery for Ram Power in Imperial Valley (Ind. Report)

Ram Power, a Nevada geothermal corporation, has successfully drilled the Orita No. 2 well located in the Imperial Valley, California. According to the company, the drilling results which suggest a power production in the 8-10 MW range, support its resource thesis for the Imperial Valley, and confirm the existence of a substantial high temperature fluid reservoir previously encountered in the 1980's with the drilling of the Emanuelli #1 well. In the first quarter of 2011 the company will continue its Imperial Valley exploration program with the commencement of drilling on a production well at the previously drilled and proven Emanuelli #2 well location.

As indicated in previous editions, Ram Power plans to build three 50-MW power generation facilities in the area and view the valley as perhaps the biggest geothermal area in the country. (Source: CAIVN, January 12, 2011)

Contact: Steven Scott, Director of Investor Relations, Ram Power Corp., 775-398-3711. *Source: EP Overviews, 1/13/11*

Southern California Edison signs contracts for more than 800MW of solar power

Southern California Edison (SCE) has signed contracts with SunPower Corp. and Fotowatio Renewable Ventures, Inc. (FRV) for more than 800 megawatts of electricity created from sunlight that will go directly to the California power grid. The contracts will include one of the country's largest single solar photovoltaic installations.

Electricity generated as a result of these contracts will total 831 megawatts. Three contracts with SunPower will total 711 megawatts and include one of the largest single solar photovoltaic installations—325 megawatts—in the United States. Contracts with FRV allow for the delivery of 120 megawatts of solar energy from four projects. Read more. *Source: PennEnergy, 1/11/11*

Iowa University Considers Permanent Biomass Cofiring

Iowa State University has recently concluded a four month long test burn of biomass. This development will help the university consider the possibility of installing a biomass plant at the university. It will soon discuss this issue with the state Department of Natural Resources.

Working closely with NextGen Biofuels, the university has been burning biomass at its coal-fired combined-heat-and-power plant in the summer of 2010. Both wood pellets and chips were burnt during the test burns that began at 5 percent biomass and rose to 10 and 15 percent. This information was revealed by Rob Ravlin, NextGen president. Wood pellets were test burnt at a 20 percent blend, raising hopes that wood waste could effectively replace coal. The changeover would not need any further capital investment. Read more. *Source: CleanTech, 1/12/11*

Deadline Extended: Nonprofits to Apply to Receive a Solar Energy System

Solar Energy to Offset Electricity Use and Energy Costs

SRP EarthWise Energy **has extended the deadline to Jan. 31** for all eligible nonprofit organizations to apply for the chance to receive one of three complimentary photovoltaic (PV) systems valued at approximately $100,000 each. These PV systems will allow nonprofits to offset a portion of their energy usage while educating the community about the benefits of solar power.

SRP EarthWise Energy is a voluntary program that Salt River Project customers can participate in for as little as $3 per month, with 100 percent of the funds utilized to donate solar PV systems to Valley nonprofit organizations. Since 2007, the voluntary fees paid by SRP EarthWise Energy customers have funded six solar PV projects for community-based programs including Sunshine Acres Children's Home, 18 Habitat for Humanity homes, Maryvale YMCA, the Phoenix Zoo, Rio Salado Audubon Center and the Desert Botanical Garden, as well as several more in the pipeline.

Not only do these projects allow the agencies to offset some of their energy use with clean, renewable energy and save money on their monthly electric bill, they also result in a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. A typical 10-kilowatt solar electric system helps to avoid the release of almost 20,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions annually, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

SRP will evaluate the applications and approve the agencies that meet the criteria for the program, and beginning in March all EarthWise Energy customers will have the chance to vote for their favorite qualifying agency. The three agencies with the most votes will receive the systems.

To be considered for this program, nonprofits must submit an application **by 5 p.m., Jan. 31.** The three organizations that will receive the solar electric systems will be announced June 6. Questions about this promotion can be directed to Lora Fox or call 602-236-2302. *Source: SRP Energy, 1/10/11*

At Lundberg Family Farms, Sun Powers More Than Just Rice Fields

Solar Powered Warehouse Extends Leadership in Sustainable Production.

Already a leader in organic and sustainable agriculture and the use of green energy, Lundberg Family Farms announces the opening of a new warehouse that is powered by 100 percent solar energy.

The family-owned producer of organic rice and rice products completed installation of 1,690 solar panels atop its 37,558 square-foot warehouse on its farm in Richvale, north of Sacramento, CA. The panels are expected to produce 500,000 kWh of green electricity, well above what's needed to power the building. Combined with 584,000 kWh of green power producing solar panels elsewhere on the farm, Lundberg Family Farms now generates 20 percent of the electricity it consumes from solar energy, and purchases renewable energy credits to offset the rest, enabling it to claim 100 percent green energy use. Read more. *Source: Lundberg Family Farms, 1/5/11*

Treasury grant extension lifts wind industry

Aid for smaller alternative-energy projects could bring business to S.D.

The tax cut package passed by Congress this month gave the renewable energy industry a nice boost: Not only did it include a one-year extension of the ethanol blender credit, but it also extended a popular cash grant that offsets some of the cost of installing an alternative energy project.

The 1603 Treasury grant, named after the section in the stimulus bill that created it, covers 30 percent of the cost

to install a wind, solar or other alternative energy system. It was set to expire at the end of the year.

South Dakota's alternative energy industry is hoping that the more people who know about the program, the more business it will bring to South Dakota's alternative energy industry. So far, only three projects in the state have received 1603 grants, and one of the companies is from Florida. Read more. *Source: Argus Leader, 12/25/10*

U.S. solar energy market could grow 60 percent in 2011, S&P unit says

S&P Equity Research solar energy analysts Clyde Montevirgen and Angelo Zino issued their 2011 predictions for the global industry and forecast a mixed picture, with "healthy sales growth" but "declining profitability for some."

The S&P analysts expect solar manufacturers whose sales are focused on the United States to outperform peers in 2011. The U.S could see at least a 60 percent rise in unit installations, which the analysts said is "far greater than our 20 percent forecast for the industry overall." The analysts attributed this mostly to "robust utility and commercially driven projects" as companies transition to renewable sources, given favorable incentives and more attractive prices. Read more. *Source: Power-Gen Worldwide, 12/21/10*

The Eden Project and EGS Energy Limited announce plans for the UK's first geothermal power plant, producing carbon neutral electricity and heat from Cornish granite

The Eden Project, the world-renowned visitor attraction and environmental education centre, announces today that it has entered into a partnership arrangement with EGS Energy Limited, a leading UK engineered geothermal system energy developer.

The partnership is for EGS Energy and Eden to establish an engineered geothermal system power plant from which Eden can take the electricity and heat to power the Eden site in an old clay quarry at Bodelva, near St Austell, Cornwall.

The partners believe that with the vast quantity of geothermal energy stored in the rocks below Cornwall, the county could eventually provide up to 10 per cent of the UK's entire electricity requirements. Read more. *Source: Eden Project, 6/1/09*

Abengoa Solar closes $1.45 Billion financing for the World's Largest Solar Generation Plant

Loan proceeds will be used for the construction of Solana, the largest concentrating solar power plant in the world. The total investment will amount around $2 billion

Abengoa Solar announced today that it has finalized $1.45 billion financing to build Solana, the world's largest parabolic trough concentrating solar plant. This plant, with a total investment of around $2 Billion, will generate 250 net megawatts (MW).

Santiago Seage, CEO of Abengoa Solar stated "Solana is the first large scale CSP plant for Abengoa Solar in the U.S. and will be a key milestone for our development in this country as it allows us to strengthen our relationships with the local community as well as with the state and Federal public authorities that have contributed notably to this project". Abengoa Solar signed a power purchase agreement with Arizona Public Service Co.(NYSE: PNW), Arizona's largest electric utility, to buy the energy produced by Solana for a period of 30 years. Read more. *Source: eSolar Energy News via BusinessWire, 12/21/10*

Learn more about renewable resources.

Outreach, Education, Reports & Studies

Register Now for the AWEA Transmission Workshop

Join top experts from the wind industry, the transmission sector, utilities and policymaking worlds to discuss the progress being made, the difficulties that remain, and the paths forward related to transmission infrastructure, wind integration and technology.

New this year!

- Concurrent tracks to facilitate a more intimate discussion
- Slide presentations in some sessions have been replaced with lively, engaging panel discussions to create a collaborative environment, and foster open dialogue between regulators and decision-makers

Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity! See the complete program agenda or register now. *Source: American Wind Energy Association, 1/21/11*

Californial Energy Commission releases new research reports

The following project fact sheets are now available on the CEC website:

- Quantification of Black Carbon Emissions From Cookstoves
- Assessing Long-Term Dynamics of Bird Distributions in Relation to Climate Change: From Early-1900s to Present
- Informing Climate Change Models with Stand Level Ecological Data: Valley Oak Woodlands in California
- Advanced Modeling of the Biological Effects of Climate Change in California

Source: California Energy Commission, 1/20/11

Take SEPA's utility solar integration survey

The Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA) is now collecting responses to the 2010 Utility Solar Integration Rankings Survey. This annual survey collects utility data on solar electricity installations in the United States, both photovoltaic (PV) and concentrating solar power (CSP), on the customer and utility side of the meter. The resulting rankings have appeared in such media outlets as the *Wall Street Journal, Renewable Energy World, Transmission & Distribution World* and *Reuters*. The information also helps utilities (regardless of rank) to compare their solar capacity with their peer utilities.

All electric utilities are eligible to take the survey. You can access the online survey until Feb. 14, 2011. SEPA will release the 2010 Utility Solar Rankings Report in May 2011, and awards will be presented during SEPA's Utility Solar Conference from July 26 to 27, 2011, in San Diego, Calif. Please contact Becky Campbell with any questions. *Source: Solar Electric Power Association, 1/19/11*

Small Wind Certification Council newsletter for January 2011

In This Issue

- 23 Pending Applications
- Wisconsin Deadline
- SWCC & MCS
- Field Test Options

Source: Small Wind Certification Council, January 2011

Top Green Building News Stories of 2010

California's new green building codes, green roofs and wind power at schools led Green Building News's top stories for 2010. Read more. *Source: Green Building News, 12/27/10*

SRP releases 2010 Sustainability Report Summary

At SRP, sustainability is a corporate strategy at the very highest level. It is central to policy development and the success of the organization.

The Sustainability Report for Fiscal Year 2010 reviews the past performance of programs and initiatives in SRP's Sustainable Portfolio and outlines our future direction.

If you would like to learn more about SRP's sustainability efforts, call 602-236-4425, or e-mail SRP. *Source: SRP, 12/28/10*

Take advantage of learning opportunities and networking with a PV America 2011 scholarship

The Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA) is pleased to offer a limited number of scholarships for utility employees to attend PV America, an SPI Regional Event, April 3 to 5, 2011, at the Philadelphia Convention Center. PV America is a world-class, regionally focused and vertically integrated event that engages a wide spectrum of industry professionals and is presented by SEPA and the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).

Why attend PV America 2011?

- Educate yourself and your team on the latest PV technologies and public incentives
- Innovate throughout your business by connecting with exhibitors showcasing the latest products and services and networking with colleagues
- Activate your new knowledge and partnerships to make the most of solar power

Scholarship recipients will receive a complimentary full conference registration, valued up to $795, plus a stipend of up to $750 for coach airfare and hotel accommodations.

The deadline to submit applications is Feb. 11, 2011, and scholarship recipients will be notified by Feb. 21, 2011.

Questions about the scholarship program can be directed to Jessica Sliva via email. *Source: Solar Electric Power Association, 12/16/10*

Scholarships available for the Community Wind Across America MidAtlantic Conference

The Appalachian Regional Commission is sponsoring Scholarships for the *Community Wind Across America* Mid Atlantic Conference in State College, Pennsylvania, Feb. 8-9, 2011.

Windustry continues the Community Wind across America conferences series in the Mid Atlantic Region, Feb. 8-9, 2011. It follows 2010 events in the Rocky Mountain and Midwest regions.

The conferences cover Community Wind and Small Wind in a two-track program, providing the full range of what's needed to advance opportunities for locally-owned wind energy production.

The Mid Atlantic program includes a keynote address from Jacques Beaudry-Losique, Wind and Water Program Director at the U.S. Department of Energy, former CIA Director James Woolsey, a renewable energy and energy security advocate. Read more. *Source: Windustry, 12/21/10*

Learn more about education and outreach activities.

News from Washington

Departments of Energy and Commerce Announce New Partnership to Further Cooperation on Renewable Energy Modeling and Forecasting

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Commerce today announced a new agreement to further collaboration between the agencies on renewable energy modeling and weather forecasting, which will help enable the nation's renewable energy resources to be used more effectively by business and entrepreneurs. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by Acting Under Secretary of Energy Cathy Zoi and Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., will encourage the two agencies to work together to develop and disseminate weather and climate information needed for renewable energy technologies that are dependent on short-term weather and longer-term climate trends. Better information on weather patterns and improved modeling of the variability of the wind, sun, water, ocean currents, and other sources of renewable energy will ultimately increase the country's ability to efficiently and reliably integrate renewable energy into the electrical grid. Read more.
Source: EERE News, 1/24/11

GAO: Smart Grid Standards Are Incomplete and Unenforceable

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has developed smart grid cybersecurity guidelines as tasked by Congress, but major gaps still need to be addressed; furthermore, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has failed to develop a coordinated approach for monitoring if and how the standards are being followed by industry, a new report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) says.

The GAO's report, "Electricity Grid Modernization: Progress Being Made on Cybersecurity Guidelines, but Key Challenges Remain to be Addressed," was commissioned by Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.). The lawmakers had asked the GAO to assess the extent to which NIST had developed smart grid standards and evaluate FERC's approach for adopting and monitoring smart grid cybersecurity. The GAO was also asked to ascertain which challenges the industry faced concerning smart grid cybersecurity. Read more. *Source: POWERnews, 1/19/11*

Energy Law Alert: Additional Potential Obstacles to Development: New Wilderness Designations

U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar recently issued Secretarial Order 3310 directing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to "designate appropriate areas with wilderness characteristics under its jurisdiction as 'Wild Lands' and to manage them to protect their wilderness values." The Secretarial Order overturns without mentioning a Bush Administration's policy which that prohibited BLM from unilaterally protecting lands it finds have "wilderness qualities." Read more. *Source: Stoel Rives, 1/7/11*

D.C. Circuit Court Denies Hoopa Valley Tribe's Petition for Review of FERC Order Denying Interim Conditions at Klamath Hydroelectric Project

On Dec. 28, 2010, the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in *Hoopa Valley Tribe v. FERC* denied the Hoopa Valley Tribe's (Tribe) petition for review of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) order denying interim conditions at the Klamath Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 2082. The court's opinion is significant for hydroelectric licensees operating under an annual license, and is an important victory for FERC and its discretion to decide whether interim conditions on a hydropower license are necessary. Read more. *Source: Van Ness Feldman, 1/5/11*

Solar Energy Development Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

The full text of the Solar Energy Development Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Solar PEIS) is available for downloading or online browsing in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. Read more. *Source: Solar EIS, 1/5/11*

President Signs Bill Extending Energy Efficiency, Renewable Provisions

President Obama on Dec. 17 signed a bill that temporarily extends through 2011 various energy efficiency and renewable energy provisions, including Section 1603 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which provides cash assistance to energy producers in place of tax credits. Under this program, the Federal government provides a cash payment in lieu of a tax credit totaling 30 percent of the qualifying cost of the project. The measure, passed by the U.S. House and U.S. Senate and hailed by renewable energy industry associations, extends for one year the start-of-construction deadline for projects such as wind and solar power that are eligible under Section 1603.

Other provisions extended through 2011 include a $1-per-gallon production tax credit for biodiesel as well as diesel fuel created from biomass; credit for manufacturers of energy-efficient residential homes; a 50-cent-per gallon alternative fuel tax credit; the existing per-gallon tax credits and outlay payments for ethanol; credits for U.S.-based manufacture of energy-efficient washing machines, dishwashers, and refrigerators; certain credit for energy-efficient improvements to existing homes; and a 30 percent investment tax credit for alternative vehicle refueling

property. See the President's remarks upon the signing of the bill, the bill summary with energy provisions on pages six to seven, and statements on the passage by the American Wind Energy Association, and the Solar Energy Industries Association. *Source: EERE Network News, 1/5/11*

2010 Tax Act has credit, grant, and depreciation extensions and changes

This alert provides a brief overview of the tax credit, depreciation, and similar provisions of the "Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010'' passed by Congress on Dec. 16, 2010; the Act was signed into law by the President on Dec. 17.

The 1603 Grant Program for renewables. Under existing law, grants under Section 1603 were only available for projects placed in service by Dec. 31, 2010, or for which the project "commenced construction" in 2009 or 2010. Treasury had provided "5 percent" and "physical work" tests for establishing that a project had commenced construction, and the relevant deadline was Dec. 31, 2010, with an additional 3-1/2 month window in certain cases. The new act extends these dates so that the project must be placed in service by Dec. 31, 2011, and it also gives an applicant until the end of 2011 to pass the 5 percent or physical work tests in order to qualify for a 1603 grant. Projects that are not placed in service by the end of 2011 must now be sure to submit at least a preliminary application by Oct. 1, 2012. Read more. *Source: Nixon Peabody, 12/20/10*

Department of Energy Finalizes Loan Guarantee to Support World's Largest Wind Project

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu today announced that a partial loan guarantee for a $1.3 billion loan has been finalized to support the world's largest wind farm. The loan will finance the Caithness Shepherds Flat project, an 845-megawatt wind generation facility located in eastern Oregon sponsored by Caithness Energy, LLC and GE Energy Financial Services.

"Renewable energy investments like these are creating jobs while helping to maintain America's global competitiveness in the clean energy economy," said Secretary Chu. "By leveraging our nation's vast natural resources, we can help provide alternative sources of energy and stimulate economic growth and job creation." Read more. *Source: EERE Progress Alerts, 12/16/10*

Learn more about national activities.

State Activities, Marketing & Market Research

Colorado STAR Project: Strategic Transmission and Renewables (STAR): A Vision of Colorado's Electric Power Sector to the Year 2050.

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO)'s STAR project picks up where GEO's Renewable Energy Development Infrastructure (REDI) report left off. The STAR project provides an extended update, as well as modeling of work produced in earlier reports issued by the Governor's Office and the GEO. The project further delves into the changing energy resource landscape. The report provides a detailed analysis of ways in which policy-makers can plan for an optimal mix of demand side measures, supply side resources, and the transmission infrastructure necessary to deliver reliable electric power to a growing, and increasingly electrified state. With proper planning Colorado can meet the power needs of the future while protecting Colorado's natural heritage for future

generations.

The STAR project provides data and insights to expand the strategic discussion regarding what mix of demand-side and supply-side resources (including high-voltage transmission) should be considered in Colorado, particularly as the state strives to meet the Colorado Climate Action Plan's objective of reducing the electricity sector's CO2 emissions by 80 percent by 2050 from a 2005 base. The STAR project consists of the STAR report, the STAR executive summary, the STAR modeling analysis, and a PowerPoint presentation. *Source: RechargeColorado, 1/12/11*

Senator: Promises made in Hawaii wind farm plan

Promises Hawaiian Electric Co. and Castle & Cooke have made to Lanai in exchange for being allowed to build a wind farm on the island are a starting point for discussions on the wind farm, the vice chairman of the state senate committee on energy and the environment said Tuesday.

Sen. Kalani English spoke at committee hearing at the state Capitol on the status of proposals to build large wind farms on Lanai and Molokai and deliver the power to Oahu and Maui by undersea cable. Read more. *Source: Bloomberg, 1/12/11*

Is small-scale wind power welcome in San Juan County?

This isn't your grandfather's long-bladed prairie windmill.

Almost whisper-quiet, the six-foot diameter Energy Ball V200 wind turbine looks like something out of the Howe art gallery: a gleaming silver orb of glass fiber polyester, composed of six blades fused at both ends. John Phillips recently applied for a permit to install an Energy Ball, anticipated to supply 9,000 kilowatt-hours of power annually to his Olga home, but the request was denied—based on a 25-foot height building restriction written into the 2006 Olga Hamlet Plan. The device is normally installed on a 35-foot pole or a rooftop. Read more. *Source: Islands Sounder, 1/7/11*

Wind expands to 7.8 percent of Texas electric supply

Electricity from wind farms in Texas climbed to 7.8 percent of the power consumed in the state last year, up from 6.2 percent in 2009, the state grid operator said in a report.

Overall, electric use in the Texas market jumped 3.5 percent in 2010 to 319,097 gigawatt-hours for the year, boosted by extreme cold in the winter and hot weather in the summer, said the Electric Reliability Council of Texas.

Power use in 2009 slipped 1.3 percent from the previous year as economic activity slowed. Read more. *Source: Reuters, 1/11/11*

Solar company coming to Blythewood

A California-based solar company plans to invest more than $300 million in a Blythewood manufacturing facility that could hire 1,000 people by 2014.

AQT Solar, founded in 2007, makes solar cells, the part of a solar panel that converts sunlight into electricity. The company has 40 employees and opened its first manufacturing facility in Sunnyvale, Calif., in August. James Smith, a Columbia attorney and member of the S.C. House of Representatives, represents the company in South Carolina. Read more. *Source: Rock Hill Herald, 1/9/11*

Solar-power buildup going large-scale across Arizona

Solar-power arrays have sprouted up on rooftops and parking garages across Tucson and Arizona.

The next big wave of solar development will be across expanses of desert, as Tucson Electric Power Co. and other Arizona utilities bring online hundreds of megawatts worth of large, utility-scale solar-power plants.

Last year, state regulators approved some 150 megawatts of renewable-energy projects to be owned by TEP or developed under power-purchase contracts with the utility, including more than 130 megawatts of new solar plants by 2013. Six of those projects are expected to go online by the end of this year. Read more. *Source: The Arizona Daily Star, 1/9/11*

NorthWestern Energy purchases Invenergy's proposed Montana Wind project (M&A)

Sioux-Falls South Dakota-based NorthWestern Energy confirmed Friday that it executed a MOU for the purchase of a 24-MW wind project being developed and constructed by Chicago-based Invenergy Wind Development near the town of Belt, Montana. This follows hard on the heels of the company's MOU for the purchase of a 24-MW wind project from Denver-based Compass Wind.

Both projects will be placed into the Montana utility's rate base, with renewable energy credits used to meet future renewable-portfolio standard obligations required by the state. Eventually, a 200- to 300-MW wind farm called Big Otter will be constructed in phases in the Belt area, according to Invenergy, which has leased 40,000 acres of land for the Big Otter project. The 24-megawatt project that will be purchased by NorthWestern is the first phase of Big Otter.

A definitive agreement is expected in the first quarter of this year, at which time NorthWestern will seek Montana Public Service Commission approval of purchase; with a decision expected in early 2012. Construction would commence upon approval for completion late in 2012. (Source: NorthWestern Energy, Great Falls Tribune, Jan. 8, 2011)

Contact: Dan Rausch, Director, NorthWestern Energy, 605-978-2902; David Groberg, VP, Development, Invenergy Wind Development, 301-610-6412. *Source: Energy Overviews, 1/10/11*

Proposed transmission line vital to S.D. Wind Power (Ind. Report)

In South Dakota, a proposed 10.6-mile electric power transmission line from a Brookings County substation to Hampton, Mn. south of St. Paul would be the westernmost segment of a 250-mile transmission line and one of four Midwestern lines proposed by CapX2020, a group of 11 utility companies, of which Excel Energy, Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy serve South Dakota, are working to upgrade the regional grid infrastructure at a cost of $1.7 billion.

"For us, this is absolutely critical to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in eastern South Dakota," said Tim Sack, the Managing Director of wind development at Portland, Ore.-based Iberdrola Renewables. Iberdrola, which has

three wind projects in South Dakota, including the 210-megawatt Buffalo Ridge II that went online last month, certainly has a vested interest in its completion—Buffalo Ridge II plugs into the Brookings substation. But two future 100-megawatt Iberdrola projects—and future projects throughout the Midwest—are even more directly dependent on this line being built, Sack said. Maple Grove, Minn.-based Great River Energy is leading the permitting and development for the Brookings line, and it will be responsible for construction. The South Dakota segment will cost about $25.6 million to build, which works out to about $2.3 million per mile, PUC chairman Steve Kolbeck pointed out.

The cost of transmission upgrades to ratepayers is generally around 7 percent of the bill, meaning utility customers can expect an additional cost of $2 to $3 a month, Great River spokesman Randy Fordice said. But this, he added, will be offset by efficiency gains from an updated grid. At the meeting, utility company representatives spoke in favor of the Brookings-to-Hampton line, which would bring 1,000 megawatts of new energy online and whose cost is estimated at $725 million. "One of the biggest problems with wind energy is transmission out of the area, and this (line) solves that problem," said Brenda Ronning, who owns property along the proposed route. Ronning, who has five wind turbines on her land, supports the new transmission line. (Source: Argus Leader, Jan. 7, 2011). Contact: Jan Johnson, Iberdrola Renewables, 503-796-7070. *Source: Energy Overviews, 1/10/11*

Preview of Western Renewable Energy Policies in 2011 and Western Renewable Energy Highlights of 2010

As we have done in each of the past five years, a summary of key renewable energy policy developments from around the West is posted to our website for your review: the Western Renewable Energy Highlights of 2010. These highlights take a look at legislative and regulatory issues, Best Management Practices for wildlife and ecosystems, regional transmission-expansion efforts, integration cost issues and other developments from Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming in 2010.

In addition, we have compiled a "Preview of 2011" for western energy policies in each of our six states in which we take a look at issues that may come to the fore in state legislatures and regulatory commissions this year. I hope you find it interesting and useful. *Source: Interwest Energy Alliance, 1/5/11*

Special Report: With solar power, it's Green vs. Green

When Mike Peterson jumped into a colleague's single turboprop Pilatus and flew over the remote central California valley that he now hopes to turn into a solar plant, he saw sunshine, flat land that would require little grading and two big transmission lines to tap into. "Wow," he remembers thinking at the time. "God made this to be a solar farm."

But when Kim Williams looks out at that same land from her lowslung ranch house, she sees an area rich with wildlife that is helping support her grass-fed chicken farm, her neighbor's cattle operations and her peaceful way of life. She supports solar energy on a small scale—the electric fence around her chicken coop is powered by solar—but says when she learned about the solar plant she felt shock and disbelief. Now, she's suing to block it. Read more. *Source: Reuters, 1/5/11*

My Turn: Green Mountain Power: Low-cost, low-carbon, reliable

As we enter the new year, there is a lot of discussion at the national and state levels about our future energy supply. Will carbon have a price? Will there be new nuclear plants built in this country? How can we build a renewable energy future and green economy? Will Vermont Yankee operate after 2012?

While there is uncertainty about the future, Vermonters may be reassured to learn how Green Mountain Power's ambitious energy plan is coming to fruition. GMP's overall rates are the lowest of the utilities serving 99 percent of Vermont customers, and Vermont's carbon footprint is one of the cleanest in the country. Our challenge is how to sustain our success in the future. Two years ago, GMP launched our energy vision to provide clean, cost-effective and incredibly reliable electricity to our customers. Read more. *Source: Burlington Free Press, 1/5/11*

Wind energy projects accelerating

Two new wind farms are beginning commercial operation in Nebraska in the waning days of the year.

Meanwhile, a Chicago-based company has won initial approval from state authorities to proceed with its plans to build a 200-megawatt farm between Elgin and Petersburg. It would be Nebraska's largest wind energy farm so far.

"It was a great year for wind development in the state of Nebraska," said Patrick Dalseth, a project manager for Midwest Wind Energy, which developed one of the newly operational wind farms.

The Laredo Ridge wind farm near Petersburg, with a capacity of 80 megawatts, is scheduled to begin commercial operation this week. Midwest Wind Energy developed the facility in conjunction with California-based Edison Mission and the Nebraska Public Power District. Read more. *Source: Omaha World-Herald, 12/27/10*

Learn more about energy analysis.

Grants, RFPs & Other Funding News

Department of Energy Offers Support for Arizona Solar Project

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu today announced the offer of a conditional commitment to Agua Caliente Solar, LLC for a loan guarantee of up to $967 million. The loan guarantee will support the construction of a 290-megawatt photovoltaic solar generating facility located in Yuma County, Arizona that will use thin film solar panels from First Solar, Inc. The project sponsor, NRG Solar, estimates the project will be the largest photovoltaic generation facility in the world when it is completed. Read more. *Source: EERE News, 1/20/11*

Department of Energy Offers First Conditional Commitment for a Loan Guarantee for Advanced Biofuels Plant

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu today announced the offer of a conditional commitment to Diamond Green Diesel, LLC, the proposed joint venture between Valero Energy Corporation and Darling International Inc., for a $241 million loan guarantee. The loan guarantee will support the construction of a 137-million gallon per year renewable diesel facility in Norco, Louisiana, about 20 miles west of New Orleans. Valero Energy Corporation plans to direct the design, construction and operation of the project and market all of its output, while Darling International Inc. will supply feedstock to the project. Read more. *Source: EERE News, 1/20/11*

Secretary Chu Announces New Efforts to Promote Clean Energy in Tribal Communities

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced today two new initiatives to promote tribal energy development and continue strengthening the partnership between the Department of Energy and tribal nations. Up to $10 million will be available this year through DOE's Tribal Energy Program to support the evaluation, development and deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on tribal lands that will help save energy and money, expand the use of renewable energy resources, and promote economic development for tribal communities.

Secretary Chu also announced that the Department's Tribal Summit with American Indian and Alaska Native leaders will be held on May 5, 2011 in Washington, D.C. The Department's new Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs will work closely with the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs in reaching out to tribal leaders in the design of the Summit. Read more. *Source: Department of Energy, 1/19/11*

HUD Announces Availability of $25.75 Million in Rural Innovation Funding

The Rural Innovation Fund Program, a successor to the defunct Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) program, sets aside $25.75 million from the Community Development Block Grant Program for grants to tribes, state housing finance agencies, state community and/or economic development agencies, local rural nonprofits, and community development corporations to address the problems of concentrated rural housing distress and community poverty.

Out of the total $25 million appropriated, $5 million is reserved "to promote economic development and entrepreneurship for Federally recognized Indian tribes, through activities including the capitalization of revolving loan programs and business planning and development" and for "technical assistance to increase capacity through training and outreach activities."

For more information, visit the HUD website or contact Robert Duncan, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, Office of Community Planning and Development at 202-402-4681 or 1-877-787-2526 (toll-free number).

Applications are due Feb. 23, 2011. *Source: DOE Tribal Energy Program, 1/11/11*

Learn more about funding solicitations.

This news item comes to you as a service of Western's Renewable Resources Program.

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Upper Great Plains Region | Desert Southwest Region | Rocky Mountain Region | Sierra Nevada Region | CRSP Customer Service Center | Corporate Service Office

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