Lockheed Martin Solar Power Testbed Will Foster Technology And Production Innovation

Lockheed Martin broke ground today for a solar power testbed to support its entry into the utility-scale renewable power generation market.

The Solar System Test and Engineering Site (SolSTES) Array testbed in southern New Jersey will provide Lockheed Martin engineers the opportunity to integrate and test a variety of solar technologies and materials selected from multiple suppliers, and to conduct production modeling. Gossamer Space Frames of Long Beach, CA, is building the testbed frame for the facility, which is scheduled for completion by Spring 2009.

"The SolSTES Array testbed is an example of the thorough systems engineering and resource commitment we bring to the toughest technical challenges -- especially those challenges that are clear national priorities," said Chris Myers, Lockheed Martin's vice president for Solar Energy Projects. "The knowledge we gain in technology integration and cost-effective production is a key advantage we will bring to nationwide opportunities -- primarily in the desert southwest -- for utility-scale solar generating plants."

In November 2007, Lockheed Martin teamed with Starwood Energy Group to pursue utility-scale solar generation projects in North America. Under the agreement, Lockheed Martin is responsible for engineering, procurement, manufacturing and systems integration. Starwood is primarily responsible for arranging long-term power purchase agreements, site selection, permitting, and for providing construction and permanent debt and equity financing. Since the teaming agreement was signed, Lockheed Martin and Starwood have been pursuing multiple utility-scale opportunities, and have invested in land acquisition, transmission, permitting, supplier base, technology development, and efficient, low cost, producibility techniques.

"Energy independence is a matter of national security and Lockheed Martin is pursuing the practical and affordable development of numerous renewable energy alternatives to support that goal," said Howard Luebcke, Lockheed Martin's Director of Renewable Energy Business Development.

Lockheed Martin and Starwood estimate continued growth of solar power due to individual state Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) -- which require specific percentages of power to come from renewable sources -- and the extension of the investment tax credit. In addition, the cost of electricity generated from solar energy is continuing to converge with the cost of electricity generated by fossil fuels. The teaming arrangement positions Lockheed Martin and Starwood to help shape a new market with a methodical approach to meet America's energy needs and business growth.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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