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Contact: Garret Drexler
garret@rosengrouppr.com
646-695-7042

Geothermal's Golden Year

After 50 Years, Geothermal Energy Still Growing

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 23, 2010) – As Sacramento, Calif., prepares to host the 2010 Geothermal Energy Expo, the geothermal energy industry's largest annual event, the Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) recognizes the 50th anniversary of utility-scale geothermal power in the United States.

Half a century ago, just north of San Francisco, construction began on The Geysers, the nation's first commercial geothermal site. Now an extensive complex of geothermal energy production, the Geysers has come a long way from its beginnings as a single 11-megawatt power plant. It set both the state of California and the nation on a path toward strong and steady geothermal growth during the ensuing five decades, and now produces enough electricity to power a city the size of San Francisco. Since the Geysers began operation, the United States has become the world leader in geothermal energy production and geothermal energy is the largest renewable source of energy in the state of California, providing 5% of the state's electric power.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of The Geysers, we are working to ensure that it remains a viable and valuable power source for generations to come," said Mike Rogers, senior vice president of regional operation at Calpine Corporation (NYSE: CPN), the largest operator at The Geysers. "In addition to piping treated wastewater from nearby communities to replenish the geothermal resource, we have completed eight new exploratory wells and are evaluating the feasibility of adding at least 40 megawatts of capacity to help meet California's trendsetting goals for renewable energy production."

And California is no longer alone in geothermal production. Approximately 3,086 Megawatts of installed capacity is produced by 77 plants in nine states. Just last year, seven new plants were brought online. Currently 188 projects in 15 different states are in consideration or under in development. Those developing projects could triple geothermal capacity over the next decade.

"These numbers are impressive," said Karl Gawell, the GEA's executive director. "In the past 50 years, geothermal energy has blazed the trail for renewable power in this nation. But this industry has not yet peaked; the growth potential for geothermal energy is incredible." Geothermal is a green, clean power source with the potential to create thousands of jobs and satisfy the energy needs of 10 million people in the coming years, according to GEA.

"As we get serious about addressing global warming, geothermal will grow in importance because it can more effectively replace conventional coal-fired powered plants," Gawell added. Where other renewable technologies look to development of storage technology to offset the intermittent nature of their production, geothermal is a baseload energy source supplying a constant, uninterrupted source of clean power.

“After what is headed to be the hottest summer on record and in the wake of the Gulf oil spill disaster, the world has been shown that we must re-examine our reliance on traditional sources of power and commit to increasing renewable energy’s role in powering our communities,” said Gawell. “There is the potential to power millions of homes, businesses and schools from the heat of the earth. The success of geothermal power over the past 50 years gives us an incredible foundation to build a green future over the next 50 years.”

From October 24-27, Sacramento will host the 2010 Geothermal Energy Expo. This annual event is the stage for the world’s largest gathering of geothermal industry leaders from all along the supply chain, including resource exploration, characterization, development, production and management. For more information on the expo, please visit:

<http://www.geothermalenergy2010.com/>

About the Geothermal Energy Association:

The Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) is a trade association composed of U.S. companies who support the expanded use of geothermal energy and are developing geothermal Resources worldwide for electrical power generation and direct-heat uses. GEA advocates for public policies that will promote the development and utilization of geothermal Resources, provides a forum for the industry to discuss issues and problems, encourages research and development to improve geothermal technologies, presents industry views to governmental organizations, provides assistance for the export of geothermal goods and services, compiles statistical data about the geothermal industry, and conducts education and outreach projects. For more information, please visit <http://www.geo-energy.org/>. Check out GEA’s [YouTube Channel](#). Follow GEA on [Twitter](#). Become a fan on [Facebook](#).

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