Nevada On-Track To Quadruple Its Geothermal Power, Over 1000 MW To Be On-Line, New Report Concludes

Washington, DC -- A new report from the Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) concludes that Nevada is now on-track to be producing over 1000 MW of geothermal power – quadrupling its current geothermal output – over the next 3 to 5 years. This level of geothermal production would meet roughly 25% of the state’s total power needs.

“A combination of federal and state policies have propelled substantial new geothermal power development in Nevada,” according to Dan Fleischmann, author of this new report, entitled “Geothermal Resource Development in Nevada – 2006” His analysis concludes that this dramatic success is due to four major factors: (1) the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS); (2) the extension of the federal production tax credit (PTC) to include geothermal energy; (3) the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) efforts to reduce its leasing backlog; and (4) the Department of Energy’s (DOE) support for cost-shared drilling, technical assistance, and the work of the Great Basin Center for Geothermal Energy at the University of Nevada Reno.

The report identifies up to 29 new geothermal power projects now under development in Nevada. The report finds that new power plants would produce as much as 853 MW. When completed, these new plants will quadruple the existing 276.4 MW capacity from Nevada’s currently operating 15 power plants. With over 1100 MW, Nevada would be generating more power than most of the 25 countries producing geothermal energy today. Only the US and the Philippines produce more.

In addition to geothermal power, the report also identifies new geothermal space and district heating projects in Elko, Fernley, and Reno and two new alternative fuels projects using geothermal energy. A bio-diesel plant is slated to commence operation in the first quarter of 2007 in Wabuska using geothermal resources for both power and heat. Also drilling for the so-called “Gerlach Green Energy Project” recently began at Gerlach. Developers say this geothermal-ethanol project may create up to 250 Nevadan jobs.

The GEA report is based upon interviews with over 60 leading experts in the geothermal field in the United States, more than 40 of whom have worked specifically with geothermal energy in Nevada. State and federal officials, researchers, utilities, industry representatives, land developers, and clean energy advocates were among the wide range of individuals interviewed.

This report complements those issued earlier this year examining geothermal resources in Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and Idaho. The report is available to download without charge from the GEA website at http://www.geo-energy.org/publications/reports.asp.