

Contact:

E-Mail: msachs@fraunhofer.org

Office: 617-575-7255

Mobile: 617-415-3895



**Fraunhofer Center for Sustainable Energy Systems Announces Opening of Albuquerque
Outdoor Solar Test Field**

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico -- July 2, 2012 -- The Fraunhofer Center for Sustainable Energy Systems (CSE) today announced the official opening of OTF-1, its new photovoltaics outdoor test field, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The facility is an extension of CSE's existing Albuquerque solar research annex, which began operation in 2011.

The purpose of the new test facility is to support PV module and component manufacturers in assessing the actual field performance and durability of their products, and to allow systems integrators to obtain the crucial data they need to meet ever-tightening performance and lifetime expectations. Obtaining test verification from the independent, non-profit Fraunhofer CSE will accelerate commercialization and establish bankability of these products.

The new facility provides a variety of performance and durability testing services, such as analysis of individual modules and components, strings, or grid-tied systems; stabilization with continuous monitoring under open circuit, short circuit, and/or max power point conditions, and inverter DC/AC power conversion analysis. These capabilities complement existing testing capabilities CSE offers in conjunction with the co-located CFV Solar Test Laboratory, which is co-owned by Fraunhofer CSE. The test field allows for testing of products and components which might not yet have UL, IEC, or similar listings.

OTF-1's location in Albuquerque, New Mexico offers over 310 days of direct sunshine, a solar spectrum consistent with typical utility-scale PV locations, and a local climate capable of spanning module temperatures greater than 50° C over the course of a single day. To fully

exploit these ideal conditions for PV testing, the site is equipped with both variable-angle mounting racks and dual-axis trackers. Micro-inverters, string inverters, continuous curve tracers, and state-of-the-art data acquisition and weather monitoring round out the capabilities.

“OTF-1 will be an important resource for our customers,” said Dr. Christian Hoepfner, Scientific Director at Fraunhofer CSE. “With annual PV installation at the multi-gigawatt scale, the industry needs enhanced feedback on actual field performance and durability of both existing and new PV technologies. This facility reinforces our commitment to conducting cutting-edge solar research for our clients, and gives our experienced technical team the flexibility to accommodate a broad range of solar power performance testing projects.”

OTF-1 is the second outdoor testing facility operated and maintained by Fraunhofer CSE; the first, located in Revere, Massachusetts, is co-located at a 750kW solar power plant owned by National Grid. A third test site currently under construction in Albuquerque, OTF-2, will provide an additional five acres of test beds. CSE will be offering additional information on OTF-1 and other outdoor testing services at Booth 8501 at Intersolar North America 2012, a solar trade show held from July 10th to 12th at the Moscone Center in San Francisco.

About Fraunhofer CSE

Based in Cambridge, MA, the Fraunhofer Center for Sustainable Energy Systems (CSE) is an applied R&D laboratory dedicated to the commercialization of clean energy technologies. CSE engages in collaborative research and development with private companies, government entities, and academic institutions, performing research that broadly benefits firms, industries, and society. These partnerships take a wide variety of forms, including confidential co-development programs, third-party technology validation, and joint applications for grant programs. Major lab and field testing initiatives focus on energy-efficient building technologies and solar PV module design and manufacturing. Additionally, CSE’s TechBridge commercialization program helps emerging sustainable energy startups to develop their technologies, bridging the gap from laboratory to wide-scale production.