

Welcome to Solar Weekly Insight, presenting the most important developments in the global solar industry, ranging from significant industry trends, policies, research, and new technologies to markets and pricing.

This week's edition focuses on 2011 PV installations in Germany, which were even higher than in the record year 2010, and on PV module prices still decreasing. In addition we are featuring the largest PV plant in Texas, and an interview with Solis Partners Managing Director Jamie Hahn.

Germany reaches 7.5 GW of new PV in 2011; 3 GW installed in December



In Q4, 2011 approx. 4.150 MW of new PV capacity have been added in Germany

This week new data emerged, showing that the German PV market has exceeded the most positive of expectations in its year-end rally. Both BSW-Solar and the German Federal Grid Agency estimated that the nation installed 7.5 GW of PV in 2011, with the Federal Grid Agency reporting that 3 GW was installed in December 2011 alone. [More](#)

These numbers also mean that Germany is likely to have retained its spot as the world's largest PV market in 2011. [More](#)

PV panel prices down in December; overall decrease in 2011 by 39 percent

Price trends December 2011

Module type, origin	€ / Wp		Trend since 2011-11
Crystalline Germany	1.12	📉	-4.8 %
Crystalline China	0.81	📉	-4.3 %
Crystalline Japan	1.10	📉	-3.6 %
Thin film CdS/CdTe	0.73	📉	-6.6 %
Thin film a-Si	0.64	📉	-4.9 %
Thin film a-Si _{1-y} -Si _y	0.82	📉	-3.5 %

Driven by the price decline of Chinese modules, other manufacturers had to follow the trend and the prices in all categories of the index reduced from 32.5 to 45% in 2011.

The prices for solar modules continued to fall in December 2010. Many distributors gave additional discounts to clear or reduce stocks for the year-end closing.

In 2011, crystalline modules from China experienced the highest price drop in the market.

With prices down by 45% compared to January 2011, the industry reached a price level that no one expected at the beginning of the year. [More](#)

Chinese PV manufacturers capacity utilization hits new low



PV Market Analyst Jessica Jin: "As Chinese Tier 1 and other suppliers are now more able to meet demand with their own production capacities, demand for OEM products has declined"

Despite the dramatic year-end rally in Germany, capacity utilizations among what IMS Research identifies as "Tier 2" Chinese PV manufacturers fell to 35% in the fourth quarter of 2011. Capacity utilization rates are forecast to fall even lower in the first quarter of 2012.

As a result of high inventory levels and a weak outlook for demand in 2012, many suppliers closed down production lines, or suspended production entirely, resulting in utilization falling to the lowest level IMS Research has recorded.

This is a sharp contrast to a year ago, when utilization rates of these suppliers hit 80% in Q4'10. [More](#)

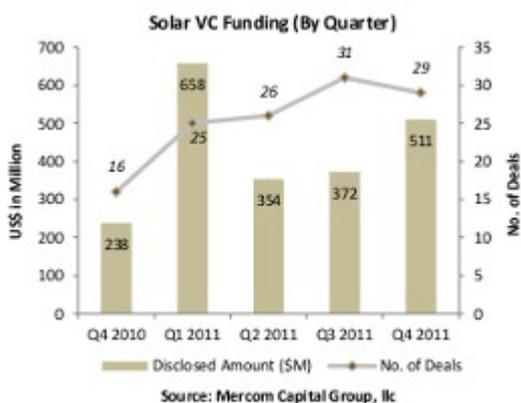
Austin Energy commissions Webberville PV plant



This week Austin Energy held a ceremony to celebrate the completion of its 30 MW Webberville PV plant, the largest in Texas and one of the largest in the United States. [More](#)

Picture left: The Webberville solar plant (partial view) was constructed by Renewable Energy Systems Americas Inc.

Mercom Capital: Solar industry sees record number of VC deals, M&A activity in 2011



Finally, this week Mercom Capital released its fourth quarter and full year 2011 Solar Funding and M&A report.

The company reports USD 1.9 billion in VC funding during the year, USD 4 billion in disclosed mergers and acquisitions, and a fall in Chinese debt funding to USD 15.7 billion during 2011.

"Investment activity in 2011 was robust," said Mercom Managing Partner Raj Prabhu. [More](#)

SRECs and New Jersey's Energy Master Plan: an interview with Jamie Hahn of Solis Partners



Solis Partners Managing Director Jamie Hahn

This week Solar Server brings you an interview with Solis Partners Managing Director Jamie Hahn, who explains how New Jersey's new Energy Master Plan could help restore the states' SREC market, as well as exploring the dynamics of the U.S. state's solar future.

Solar Server: **What are your impressions of Governor Christie's Energy Master Plan for New Jersey?**

Jamie Hahn: Overall, I feel as though the EMP provides a roadmap for how New Jersey can promote a diverse portfolio of new, clean, cost-effective in-state electric generation. I think it recognizes the role that solar power can play in meeting the state's RPS objective as well as its role as an engine for economic growth. [More](#)

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Heindl Server GmbH
Kaiserstraße 137
D - 72764 Reutlingen

Tel.: +49 (0)7121-69681-30
Fax: +49 (0)7121-69681-38

Register of corporations number::
HRB 382398 Handelsregister des Amtsgerichts
Stuttgart

CEO / Editor in Chief: Rolf Hug;
rolf.hug@solarserver.de

Solarserver North America Representation
One Embarcadero Center, Suite 1060
San Francisco, CA 94111

Toll-Free: + 1 877 SUN 7077
or +1 877 786 7077
Fax: +1 415 627 9169

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