

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.

PV troubles: ECD bankruptcy, part time for First Solar's German workers

This week brought more news of the ongoing difficulties in the global PV industry.

On February 14th, 2012 Energy Conversion Devices announced that it has filed for bankruptcy, and that it will sell its United Solar Ovonic subsidiary, which makes flexible thin-film PV modules.



First Solar, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

The reduction of working hours for First Solar employees at the Frankfurt (Oder) facility is part of a global reduction in capacity utilization in 2012

UNI-SOLAR will continue to operate during the sale process, and has also filed for Chapter 11 relief. A day prior on February 13th, 2012 ECD sold subsidiary Ovonic Battery Company Inc. (Rochester Hills, Michigan, U.S.) to BASF Corporation (Florham Park, New Jersey, U.S.) for USD 58 million in cash before adjustments. [more](#)

First Solar also told Solar Server that it plans to reduce hours for 1,200 workers at its PV factory in Frankfurt (Oder), as part of its plan to move to 80% capacity utilization globally in 2012. First Solar has not announced reductions in hours or staffing at other locations at this time. [more](#)

Promotion

Forum for PV suppliers and manufacturers



The [PV Fab Managers Forum](#) is the most important forum where suppliers and manufacturer meet and discuss current challenges and future requirements. No other forum brings together the whole manufacturing supply chain better and offers such a dens line-up of presentations from industry professionals.

This forum has a clear focus on addressing the burning issues, crucial success factors shared by the community. It will point out needs for combined efforts by PV manufacturers, equipment and materials suppliers and academia community. The PV FMF will also give an update on the [International Technology Roadmap for PV \(ITRPV\)](#). The first time the new publication was created with the input of leading European, Asian and US cell and module manufacturers.

CSP & CPV: SolarReserve completes tower for Crescent Dunes CSP project, loan for Soitec CPV



With financing now in place, we are moving forward to provide South Africa with its first large-scale CPV renewable-energy plant," said Soitec Chairman and CEO André Jacques Auberton-Hervé

However, if this was a difficult week for PV manufacturers, it was a much better week for concentrating solar technologies.

On February 9th, Solar Reserve announced that it has completed a 165 meter tower for its 110 MW Crescent Dunes CSP plant in Nevada, which includes substantial energy storage. The plant will utilize molten salt as both a thermal receiver and heat storage medium, as the largest plant based on this technology in the world. [more](#)

On the same day, Soitec announced that it has received financing to build a 50 MW CPV plant in South Africa's Western Cape region. The plant will not only be the first commercial-scale CPV plant in Africa, but will be much larger than any operational CPV plant in the world. [more](#)

U.K. DECC announces changes to FIT program

Late last week, the U.K.'s Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced structural modifications to the nation's feed-in tariffs, including tying PV subsidy levels to industry cost reductions.

The changes have received mixed reviews from the U.K. renewable energy sector, but not the outright condemnation that has been the response to much of the DECC's actions under Conservative leadership. [more](#)

Obama releases budget proposal including TGP extension



U.S. President Barack Obama's proposed budget increases clean energy R&D while reducing fossil fuel subsidies

Also during the week, U.S. President Obama released a proposed 2013 budget that reads like a wish list for the global PV industry, including an extension of the Section 1603 Treasury Grant Program and expanded funding for the U.S. DOE's SunShot Initiative.

However, as in past years it is likely that the Republican Party in the U.S. Congress will block much of this budget from being realized. [more](#)

Also this week, a group of 45 Solar CEOs sent a letter to President Obama asking him to work together with Chinese leaders in promoting the global solar industry, while warning of the dangers posed by the brewing trade war between the two nations. [more](#)

Thanks for your interest in the Solar Weekly Insight. Stay posted for next week's industry highlights.

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