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Economic Benefits of Renewables the Focus of Clean Energy Summit

Ormat Technologies Already Generating New Jobs with Geothermal Energy

LAS VEGAS, NV – This Monday, the eyes of the nation will be on Las Vegas, where some of the most prominent figures advancing the cause of renewable energy will converge. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), former Vice President and Nobel Prize winner Al Gore, financier T. Boone Pickens and others will meet at the National Clean Energy Summit to discuss “Jobs and the New Economy.”

To show that the economic benefits of renewable energy are no mirage, a program called [Clean Energy Pioneers](#) is chronicling the jobs and new economic vitality that have already taken root in the West through the development of the region’s abundant, clean, and renewable energy.

This month, the Clean Energy Pioneers program, sponsored by Environmental Defense Fund, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union and Western Resource Advocates, turns its attention to the jobs and economic benefits created by developing Nevada’s bountiful geothermal resources. Geothermal produces a constant, reliable and nearly inexhaustible flow of energy that can power communities in Nevada and surrounding states.

[Ormat Technologies, Inc.](#) is August’s Clean Energy Pioneer. The Reno-based company employs 130 Nevadans at four geothermal power plants in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Due to Nevada’s extraordinary potential, many more projects are in the works.

“We’ve only scratched the surface. The potential for this resource is endless,” said Paul Thomsen, director of policy and business development for Ormat.

Creating clean, renewable energy isn't the only benefit of Ormat's operations.

"Nevada needs clean renewable energy as well as a new source of jobs and economic development to diversify its economy," said Charles Benjamin, Western Resource Advocates' Nevada Director. "Ormat has been a pioneer in producing both for Nevada and will lead the way for greater use of wind, solar and increased energy efficiency."

Nevada's geothermal resources already have a track record of success, providing power to communities in the northern area of the state. Research from the Western Governors' Association 2006 Geothermal Task Force Report estimates about 5,630 megawatts of geothermal energy are viable for commercial development in the West by 2015. That's almost 70% more energy than would have been provided by the three major coal plant proposals in Nevada that have recently been shelved or are struggling to gain approval.

"Nevada has the opportunity to lead the nation in the generation of clean energy," said Dan Grossman of Environmental Defense Fund. "Some of the nation's finest solar, wind and geothermal resources are available in this state and Nevada has the opportunity to be a nationwide leader in the creation of green jobs."

Developing clean renewable energy can help bring economic recovery to the West's vast expanses of rural areas.

"The importance of renewable energy to rural economies can't be underestimated," said Bill Midcap of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. "Renewable energy can provide the economic diversity that helps farmers and rural communities smooth out the ups and downs of commodity prices so that family farmers can stay in business and small towns can give their young people more opportunities."

To read more about Clean Energy Pioneers across the West, click on www.cleanenergypioneers.com.

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***Rocky Mountain Farmers Union**, is a progressive, grassroots organization dedicated to achieving profitability for family farmers and ranchers, promoting stewardship of land and water resources, delivering safe, healthy food to consumers, and strengthening rural communities through education, legislation, and cooperation, visit www.rmfu.org*

***Environmental Defense Fund**, a leading national nonprofit organization, represents more than 500,000 members. Since 1967, Environmental Defense Fund has linked science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships to create breakthrough solutions to the most serious environmental problems. For more information, visit www.edf.org.*

***Western Resource Advocates**, protects the West's land, air, and water recognizing that success can only come from working collaboratively with other conservation groups, hunters and fishermen, ranchers, American Indians, and all those who seek a sustainable future for this remarkable part of the country, visit www.westernresourceadvocates.org*