

### Knoxville - Oak Ridge Innovation Valley Future Aglow With Solar

KNOXVILLE and OAK RIDGE, Tenn., Oct. 2 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Governor Phil Bredesen's announcement of a \$62.5 million economic stimulus grant for solar research further solidifies Tennessee's position ranking as a top-tier green energy state.

The federal grant for the "Volunteer State Solar Initiative" will be split roughly evenly between two major projects, both of them with a strong University of Tennessee (UT) connection. About half of the funds will be used to build a solar power demonstration farm in Western Tennessee next to a state-designated "megastile" much like the one that recently helped officials in Chattanooga land a \$1 billion Volkswagen plant. Genera Energy, a non-profit arm of UT, will operate the solar farm. The rest of the funds will go to the Tennessee Solar Institute, which will award innovation grants to stimulate new technologies. The institute will be part of the UT-ORNL Joint Institute for Advanced Materials Science planned for the university's new Cherokee Farm campus in Knoxville.

The Pew Charitable Trusts now ranks Tennessee third in the race to develop a clean energy economy. The State's renewable energy sector has already helped create roughly 2,400 new jobs, and economic development and research officials believe this is only the start.

That sense of optimism is perhaps strongest in the Knoxville-Oak Ridge Innovation Valley, which is home to Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), the University of Tennessee (UT), and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) headquarters.

The Tennessee solar industry got a major boost recently when chemical giants Hemlock and Wacker Chemie announced they will build \$1 billion polycrystalline silicon manufacturing facilities in Clarksville and Cleveland, Tennessee, respectively. The silicon is used in solar panels.

In other recent developments:

- The Department of Energy awarded Knoxville a Solar City grant to promote the use of solar power.
- Knoxville engineering firm EnerNex won an \$8.5 million grant from the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop smart grid standards. The payoff will be better management of electricity flow to homes and businesses.
- As part of a \$100 million federal grant to Arizona-based ECOTALITY, Tennessee is among five states that will receive electric charging stations for cars now in development at Nissan, which has its U.S. headquarters in Nashville.

The Knoxville-Oak Ridge Innovation Valley economic development community leverages technological advances into prosperity. Innovation Valley economic developers recently participated in the International Photovoltaic show in Hamburg, Germany, and will represent the Innovation Valley at the Solar Power International trade show in Anaheim, California, later this month. For information about the Innovation Valley, visit the award-winning website, [www.knoxvilleoakridge.com](http://www.knoxvilleoakridge.com) or contact Garrett Wagley at [gwagley@knoxvillechamber.com](mailto:gwagley@knoxvillechamber.com)

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