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NREL and Company Researchers Team Up on Thin Film Solar Cells

Golden, Colo., Nov. 11, 2003 – An Austin, Tex.-based company is moving toward commercial production of advanced solar cells by using unique facilities and capabilities of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

HelioVolt Corp. is attempting to prove the viability of patented technology it has developed for making thin-film Copper Indium Gallium Diselenide (CIGS) solar cells.

“This is an excellent example of beneficial collaboration between a private company and a national laboratory,” said John Benner, a research manager at NREL’s National Center for Photovoltaics. “By removing the obstacles to mass production of thin film cells, we can fast-forward to the day when solar is cost-competitive with conventional energy sources in a wider range of applications.”

The HelioVolt process, which involves depositing two thin chemical reactant layers and rapidly heating them to bond CIGS films to sheets of glass or other surfaces, is one of several innovative thin-film technologies that hold the promise of significantly lowering the cost of solar cells for the commercial market.

“There are a lot of smart people here at NREL who have dedicated their lives to this work, and the array of lab facilities is unparalleled,” said HelioVolt President and CEO Billy Stanbery. “There really was no other place to do this work.”

NREL and HelioVolt currently are working under a \$100,000 Cooperative

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Research and Development Agreement (CRADA). The CRADA is unusual in that the company is providing a majority of resources, totaling \$75,000 in this phase of the project. NREL is providing facilities and staff valued at \$25,000.

The goal of the six-month agreement is to produce a prototype of a HelioVolt CIGS photovoltaic cell, from which commercial production could be later established.

HelioVolt Corporation will make a presentation at the 16th NREL Industry Growth Forum, Nov. 17-19 in Austin, Texas. Learn about the forum at <http://www.incubator.com/nrel/>.

Additional information on HelioVolt is available at www.heliovolta.com. An overview of NREL and DOE's photovoltaic research program can be accessed at <http://www.nrel.gov/ncpv/>.

NREL is the U.S. Department of Energy's premier laboratory for renewable energy research and development and a leading laboratory for energy efficiency R&D. NREL is operated for DOE by Midwest Research Institute and Battelle.

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