



U.S. Department of Energy

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy *Bringing you a prosperous future where energy is clear, abundant, reliable, and affordable*

EERE Program News

Programs, policies and the business of moving new energy products into the marketplace

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March 2009

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In [NEWS](#), People wonder if Recovery Act funding will reach ordinary citizens.

DOE Secretary Steven Chu recently answered that question with a resounding, "Yes," at a Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) event in Milwaukee, Wis.

[\(Video\)](#)

The [Recovery Act](#) kicks weatherization funding up to more than \$5 billion, far above historic levels of about \$200-240 million annually. The bulk of that additional money will be spent in local economies within the next two years.

Secretary Chu said, "As we reduce our energy consumption, we produce less carbon dioxide. This is, in every way, beneficial — to the global environment, the local economy and to the people living in these homes."

The Recovery Act funding will weatherize an estimated 650,000 homes and create up to 35,000 jobs. Historically, each dollar spent on weatherization returns about \$1.65 in energy savings and an additional \$1.16 in non-energy benefits to households, ratepayers, and society.

DOE administers the WAP through states and Tribes, providing technical and administrative training, energy efficiency oversight, and fiscal and accounting oversight.

[FEATURES](#) explores the exciting new world of social media and how it impacts energy efficiency and renewable energy.



The cost of solar panels is coming down as more are installed in a variety of applications, from homes to concentrating solar power plants. Recovery Act funding should help accelerate this trend.

Photo courtesy of: [The Apollo Alliance](#)

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News

Keeping up with biomass and biofuels

The [Biomass Program](#) offers a weekly electronic newsletter about what's happening in the biomass industry, both in and out of government. It's a quick compilation of biomass news that might otherwise be missed.

Recent coverage:

[Shell dumps wind, solar and hydro power in favor of biofuels](#) — March 17

Shell will no longer invest in renewable technologies such as wind, solar and hydro power because they are not economic, the Anglo-Dutch oil company said today. It plans to invest more in biofuels...

[Weary catfish farmers becoming landlords of algae](#) — March 11

Pond scum was once an aquatic nuisance that Hall Barret III once hated to see in his catfish ponds. It just might become his next cash cow. After more than 30 years, Barret is giving up catfish and becoming a landlord of algae. The Scottsdale, Ariz.-based company wants to convert Barret's catfish ponds into an algae farm....

[E.U. slaps duties on U.S. biodiesel](#)



Algae, long considered a problem on still water ponds and slow moving streams, is gaining credence as a source of sustainable biofuels.

Photo courtesy of: Cheryl Hill

imports — March 4

A key European Union trade panel approved on Tuesday temporary anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties on imports of biodiesel from the United States. "It went through with no problem," one source told Reuters. From March 13,

U.S. firms exporting biodiesel into the EU will have to pay additional tariffs for an initial six months, ranging from 26 euros to 41 euros per 100 kg.

Job growth likely in advanced biofuels, group says — Feb. 25

Advanced biofuel refineries could create thousands of new U.S. jobs within a few years. A report released by Biotechnology Industry Organization estimates that the full economic impact from advanced biofuels — renewable fuels derived from sources other than corn starch — could result in more than 800,000 jobs by 2022.

Subscribe to **Biomass in the News** by dropping an e-mail to editor, [Daniel Fishman](#).

Or, if you just want to keep up with biofuel prices at the retail pump, check out the [Biomass Program's animated counter](#) (at the bottom of the page) that tracks ethanol and biodiesel prices, E85 stations opened, gasoline price and more.

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Tackling renewable energy headwinds

A new [U.S. Chamber of Commerce blog](#) catalogues 62 wind, wave, solar and biofuel projects and 15 high-voltage transmission proposals across 25 states that have faced significant local opposition.

[Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope told the Wall Street Journal](#), "It is possible to put a good thing in the wrong place; [local opposition] is a real issue and we need to plan a rational, national location and transmission strategy for renewables — and that won't be universally applauded."

This is not a new story; last summer's escalating commodity prices triggered a "fuel vs. food" debate that centered on biofuel production.

The 468-megawatt Cape Wind Project in Nantucket Sound off the coast of



Concentrating solar power plants, such as Solar Two, generate electricity from the sun, producing no emissions, yet cause controversy because of the transmission lines required to get the power to urban

Massachusetts has failed to win final approval because of coordinated local opposition.

centers.

Photo courtesy of: NREL

These pockets of resistance share a commonality; renewable energy advocates have been unable to effectively communicate offsetting benefits of the projects.

The implication is global. As more nations view renewable energy as an important economic resource, reactive trade restrictions are sometimes triggered, slowing renewable energy development.

European Union trade ministers recently voted, for example, to apply a [stiff tariff on U.S.-produced biodiesel](#). The U.S. imposes a 53-cents-per-gallon [tariff on Brazilian ethanol](#).

U.S. voters are also more closely scrutinizing renewable energy projects and ideas. Los Angeles voters earlier this month [defeated a solar energy plan](#) that had been considered a slam-dunk among supporters.

Bottom line: As renewable energy moves further into the mainstream, advocates must more effectively market their products against competing technologies and ideas.

Communicating the advantages of renewable energy is critical. Building trust is key.

These topics and ideas will be covered at a "Communicating Renewables Summit 2009" to be held in Minneapolis, Minn., April 21-23.

[\(Video - scroll down\)](#)

Learning to use the web to more effectively communicate is one vital piece of the puzzle. Read [FEATURES](#), to learn how social media tools can help tell the clean energy and energy efficiency story.

[Comments:](#)

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AT&T switches to alternative fuel vehicles



AT&T has announced the largest U.S. corporate commitment to CNG vehicles to date. The new purchases will bring the company's alternative fuel fleet to more than 15,000 vehicles by 2019.

Photo courtesy of: Converge Network Digest

AT&T has announced it will [spend up to \\$565 million on alternative fuel vehicles](#).

The company will deploy more than 15,000 alternative fuel vehicles over the next 10 years. AT&T expects to spend an estimated \$350 million to purchase about 8,000 compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles and approximately \$215 million to begin replacing its passenger cars with alternative fuel models.

The [Center for Automotive Research \(CAR\)](#) in Ann Arbor, Mich., estimates that the new vehicles will save 49 million gallons of gasoline and reduce carbon emissions by 211,000 metric tons, equivalent to eliminating emissions from more than 38,600 traditional passenger vehicles for a year.

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States and others build Recovery Act Web sites

On his first day in office, President Obama gave the Executive Branch 120 days to tell him how to implement an Open Government Directive taking full advantage of internet technologies.

People outside the beltway also heard him.

From [Maine](#) to [Washington](#) to [Colorado](#) to [Maryland](#) to [Georgia](#) to [California](#), web sites are popping up to keep citizens apprised of how Recovery Act funding will be spent.

Check the new interactive map on [Recovery.gov](#) to see what your state offers.

Also visit web sites such as the [U.S. Council of Mayors](#).

For energy-related Recovery Act news, try the new [EERE Recovery Act site](#).

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DOE, HUD team up in home energy efficiency

[DOE and the Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) will work together to leverage roughly \\$16 billion in Recovery Act funding, spurring growth in the home energy efficiency industry .](#)

DOE's Recovery Act funding includes more than \$11 billion to states, local governments and tribal governments to use for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

HUD Recovery Act funding includes \$4.5 billion to renovate and upgrade public and tribal housing, and \$250 million for energy retrofits of privately owned, federally assisted housing.



Recovery Act tax credits and program spending are aimed at revitalizing the home energy efficiency business. Home energy efficiency offers quick gains in reducing national energy use.

Photo credit of: [LivingGreen Home](#)

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Features



From the U.S. Embassy in Chile setting up a Facebook page for students, to Lance Armstrong tweeting with [Live Strong](#) cancer survivors, social media impacts how we communicate and support each other.

When Armstrong's time trial bike was stolen during the recent Amgen Tour of California, [Sacramento police recovered it within four days](#), aided by thousands of upset Twitter and Facebook fans who applied public pressure on the thieves.

Photo courtesy of: Michael Mariant, Associated Press

Marketing clean energy in a social media world

[Wikis](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Technorati](#), [MySpace](#), [Flickr](#), [LinkedIn](#): the list grows almost weekly. And don't forget more than 112 million blogs.

Q: So what's this have to do with energy efficiency and renewable energy?

A: Plenty.

If you are a green power guru, renewable energy marketer or energy efficiency advocate, it's risky business to ignore the web-based, social media revolution.

If consumers don't know about a technology or product, they don't buy it. If voters don't know about a policy, they don't support it.

Selling clean energy means knowing who to talk to, and how to reach them.

Today's social media sites sort this out; visitors self-select according to their own interests.

Look no further than last November's election to see the benefits of skillfully using web-based, social media marketing.

If that's not enough to demonstrate the shift in how people gather, share and act upon information, look at what's happening to U.S. newspapers:

- Chicago Tribune in bankruptcy;
- Seattle Post-Intelligencer ends print edition;
- Christian Science Monitor stops printing presses;



Daily newspapers continue to undergo stress, partially as a result of increasing competition from the internet.

Photo courtesy of: innovativeinteractivity

- San Francisco Chronicle on the ropes;
- Rocky Mountain News closes doors;
- Miami Herald hands out pink slips.

Then, explore the countervailing headlines:

- Use of social media sites doubles every month;
- YouTube reaches 51 million Americans each month;
- More than 22,000 companies now have a presence on Facebook;
- Facebook adds one million visitors a week – almost half of whom are 35 or older;
- 25 million people use Facebook every day;
- Technorati tracks 112 million blogs;
- 75 percent of reporters turn to blogs to help develop stories.

According to a [recent survey](#), 60 percent of Americans use social media, and of those, 85 percent believe that companies should use these services to interact with consumers.

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Why care about web 2.0 or social media?

A couple of definitions are necessary to understand how social media can be used to effectively communicate to large numbers of people in a short time.

First, think of the whole idea as gossiping over the backyard fence. It's neighbor to neighbor — except that the neighborhood is the whole world, and the neighbors are a self-selected group of people intensely interested in the same things as you.

Web 2.0 , in a nutshell, is any web-based technology that allows people to hold natural, genuine conversations about topics of mutual interest.



Scott Monty, social media director for Ford Motor Company, joins the conversation on Twitter and directly addresses a customer's concern.

Photo courtesy of: Ford Motor Company

and interconnected world, a system of flows and feeds – completely different from the assembly line [approach of the past]."

A higher percentage of older generations are now online, participating in new ways. From 2005 to 2008, adults having a profile on a social networking site increased from 8 percent to 35 percent. ([Pew Internet & American Life Project survey](#))

The mass movement toward social media participation is a true paradigm shift in the way

Within this context, [social-networking sites](#), [video and photo sharing sites](#), [wikis](#), [blogs](#) and [Twitter](#) are usually lumped together as [social media](#).

Dave Evans, author of a [book on the subject](#), says that social media is "...about sharing and arriving at a collective point, often for the purpose of making a better or more-informed choice."

Steven Berlin Johnson, a science writer, says, "Today's [social] media is in fact much closer to a real-world ecosystem in the way it circulates information than it is like the old industrial, top-down models of mass media. It's a much more diverse

society communicates and makes decisions.

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Government agencies blog and Twitter

[ComputerWorld](#) recently explored use of interactive Web 2.0 and social media tools.

They found that federal agencies are already taking a cue from the [updated WhiteHouse.gov](#) Web site and moving to make their own sites more interactive and timely.

"The [General Services Administration](#), for instance, has delivered on a promise to use Web 2.0 technology to give citizens electronic access to government information. The [USA.gov Web site](#) now is offering a government wide news feed service and a gallery of widget applications.

"Using these Web 2.0 tools is a huge opportunity for government to be transparent and save valuable tax dollars," said Beverly Godwin, director of USA.gov. "Tools such as RSS feeds and widgets allow the public to directly access content from the original source, no matter which Web site they're on. It reduces duplication across government, because an agency creates content once and makes it available for reuse by others."

The USA.gov Web site is designed with the end user in mind, not the program director wanting "to get her or his message out."

[Social Security Online](#) is another federal web site geared directly toward interactive customer usability. The [Internal Revenue Service Web site](#) is yet one more site that has moved far toward interaction and usability.

The [U.S. Embassy in Santiago, Chile has launched a Facebook page](#) to provide information about academic opportunities and programs for American and Chilean students (high school and college levels).

More than 2500 American youngsters now travel to Chile each year to study. Likewise, numerous Chilean students participate in U.S. educational and cultural exchange programs each year. Most of these students use social media such as Facebook to keep in touch with friends, exchange ideas and promote activities and interests. The new page also serves as a bridge between [the Embassy](#) and its young audience.



A Facebook page offers an opportunity for six Chilean public high school English teachers from Chillán, Curicó, Valparaíso, and Santiago to keep in touch back home while visiting schools in the U.S.

Photo courtesy of: U.S. Embassy, Santiago, Chile

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It's all about engagement, trust and content

The guidelines for success in the social media world are straight-forward.

Engagement

Forget about "controlling the message" in the traditional sense.

When you choose to participate in the social media world, you are engaging in relationship building, not sales.

You are now part of the conversation, not the presenter at the podium.

Trust

Contribute useful information to the discussion. Honestly represent your organization.

Truthfully present your ideas, policies and products. Respect others.

Avoid hyperbole. Counter untruths, rumors and suspicions with facts and rational opinions.

Prevaricate, and the social media world will boomerang on your message in a heartbeat.

Content

Content is still king, just as in any form of communication.

Make your social media contributions relevant, concise and interesting.

Think interactively. Think visually. Think video.

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EERE News Releases

March 20, 2009

[Obama Administration offers \\$535 million loan guarantee to Solyndra, Inc.](#)

March 19, 2009

[President Obama announces \\$2.4 billion in funding to support next generation electric vehicles](#)

March 12, 2009

[Administration announces nearly \\$8 billion in weatherization funding and energy efficiency grants](#)

March 4, 2009

[DOE announces investment of up to \\$84 million in geothermal energy](#)

Feb. 27, 2009

[Secretaries Donovan and Chu announce partnership to help working families weatherize their homes](#)

Feb. 19, 2009

[DOE Secretary Chu announces changes to expedite economic recovery funding](#)

Feb. 18, 2009

[Energy Department, Northwest Food Processors Association set energy efficiency goals for industry](#)

Feb. 17, 2009

[American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allots \\$16.8 billion for EERE](#)

Jan. 30, 2009

[USDA, DOE announce up to \\$25 million in funding for biomass research and development initiative](#)

Jan. 9, 2009

[Annual progress report highlights hydrogen program activities](#)

Jan. 5, 2009

[Geothermal developers remain optimistic](#)

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Reader Comments

February — Slashing cellulosic ethanol costs

I'd like to get in touch with the research group doing this work, to learn more about their process. I'm also interested in biochar, pyrolysis and electricity generation from biomass.

— A.V.

Editor's response:

Contact Office of Biobased Technologies

109 Agriculture Hall • East Lansing, MI 48824

Tel: 517/353-9607

or

The Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center

1550 Linden Drive

Madison, WI 53706

glbrc@cals.wisc.edu

The Recovery Act

\$18 billion tax break - WHO signed the stimulus bill????

— K.S.

Slashing cellulosic ethanol costs

We should remember that farmers may produce two percent of the CO2 emissions but they do produce 100 percent of the food we eat so cheap; let us hold them in great esteem.

— S.L.

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Speeches, Op-Eds and Testimony

March 17

[Statement of Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy, before the Committee on Science and](#)

[Technology, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.](#)

"Today, we import roughly 60 percent of our oil, draining resources from our economy and leaving it vulnerable to supply disruptions. Much of that oil is controlled by regimes that do not share our values, weakening our security. Additionally, if we continue our current rates of greenhouse gas emissions, the consequences for our climate could be disastrous. Meeting these challenges will require both swift action in the near-term and a sustained commitment for the long-term to build a new economy, powered by clean, reliable, affordable, and secure energy...."

March 11

[Statement of Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy, before the Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate](#)

"The Recovery Act will create new jobs making our homes and offices more energy efficient. It includes \$5 billion to weatherize the homes of low-income families; a \$1,500 tax credit to help homeowners invest in efficiency upgrades; \$4.5 billion to "green" federal buildings, including reducing their energy consumption; and \$6.3 billion for state and local efficiency and renewable efforts.

"It also includes \$6 billion for loan guarantees and more than \$13 billion in estimated tax credits and financial assistance instruments (grants and cooperative agreements) that may leverage tens of billions in private sector investment in clean energy and job creation. The bill also makes investments of \$2 billion in advanced battery manufacturing, \$3.4 billion for fossil energy research and development in support of clean coal efforts, and \$4.5 billion for our efforts to modernize the electric grid...."

March 5

[Statement of Secretary of Energy Steven Chu before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate](#)

"...We need to do more transformational research at DOE to bring a range of clean energy technologies to the point where the private sector can pick them up, including:

- Gasoline and diesel-like biofuels generated from lumber waste, crop wastes, solid waste, and non-food crops;
- Automobile batteries with two to three times the energy density that can survive 15 years of deep discharges;
- Photovoltaic solar power that is five times cheaper than today's technology;
- Computer design tools for commercial and residential buildings that enable reductions in energy consumption of up to 80 percent with investments that will pay for themselves in less than 10 years; and
- Large scale energy storage systems so that variable renewable energy sources such as wind or solar power can become base-load power generators.

"This is not a definitive list, or a hard set of technology goals, but it gives a sense of the types of technologies and benchmarks I think we should be aiming for...."

March 5

[Secretary Steven Chu Editorial in USA Today: Research pays for itself: Investments in clean energy will unleash innovations, create jobs](#)

"...Clean energy is the best opportunity we have to create jobs today and launch the industries of tomorrow. It's also critical for our security — to reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil — and to save our planet from the potentially devastating effects of climate change...."

"We have begun the transformation to a clean energy economy through the president's economic recovery plan. And to truly rise to this challenge, President Obama has pledged to invest \$15 billion a year to develop and deploy the next generation of renewable energy technology here in America....

"...With these investments, we will unlock the true potential of solar and wind energy. We will develop advanced biofuels and learn to use coal in a clean way. We will make highly fuel-efficient cars and trucks. And those are just the technologies we already know about. This strategic investment in clean energy will unleash the innovations that will power our economy for years to come."

Feb. 5

[Remarks of President Barack Obama](#) promoting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan at the U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, D.C.

"...This plan will spark the creation of a clean energy industry that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs over the next few years, manufacturing wind turbines and solar cells for example, and millions more after that.

"These jobs and these investments will double our capacity to generate renewable energy over the next few years.

"We'll fund a better, smarter electricity grid and train workers to build it – a grid that will help us ship wind and solar power from one end of this country to another....

"We'll also lead a revolution in energy efficiency, modernizing more than 75 percent of federal buildings and improving the efficiency of more than 2 million American homes. This will not only create jobs, it will cut the federal energy bill by a third and save taxpayers \$2 billion each year and save Americans billions of dollars more on their utility bills."

Feb. 5

DOE Secretary [Steven Chu introduces President Obama](#) to the department:

"We must not miss the rare and remarkable opportunity before us.... The American Recovery and Reinvestment Agenda that President Obama has outlined will put our country back to work.

"...It will begin to transform the way we produce and use energy – recognizing that we must act now to address the global climate crisis.

"As a scientist, I understand the seriousness of the economic and climate challenges we face. But I remain optimistic that scientific research will once again bring us transformative solutions. Some of these technologies are already within our grasp, while others are yet to come.

"As the premiere science agency in the field, the Department of Energy will play a crucial role in developing those solutions and in helping them take hold in our nation's economy."

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Events

If you have an event scheduled in the next year of regional or national interest to the energy efficiency and renewable energy communities, please contact us with pertinent

information and a web link and we will include it in EERE Program News. — [Jack Jenkins](#), [John Horst](#), [Mariel Sala](#)

[National Hydrogen Association Conference](#) — March 30 - April 3, Columbia, S.C.
Meeting explores work by the Savannah River National Laboratory and the Center for Hydrogen Research to address hydrogen production and storage, and by South Carolina's research universities to tackle automotive integration, fuel cell research and future transportation needs.

[Surviving the Solar Shakeout: Solar Industry Summit](#) — April 14-15, Phoenix, Ariz.
Greentech Media's Solar Industry Summit participants will debate the solar industry's future with leading analysts, utilities leaders and policy makers.

[Renewable Energy in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean](#) — April 27-29, San Francisco, Calif.
Conference will explore successes/challenges/solutions to creating sustainable renewable energy environments in the emerging markets. Optional visits to see solar sites, wind farms, and/or biofuel plants. Match-making opportunities to create renewable energy partnerships between U.S. entities and emerging market consumers.

[The 31st Symposium on Biotechnology for Fuels and Chemicals](#) — May 3-6, San Francisco, Calif.
Forum for experts from around the world to discuss latest results in research, development and deployment of renewable fuels and chemicals technologies.

[2009 Nanotech Conference and Expo](#) — May 3-7, Houston, Texas
Conference will bring together over 5,000 technology and business leaders, along with experts from academia, government, startups and Fortune 1,000 companies. Meeting will showcase advanced research and best practices, along with the latest tools and equipment.

[Bio 2009 Annual International Convention](#) — May 17-20, Atlanta, Ga.
This event is billed as the world's largest annual nanotechnology conference and expo. Now in its 12th year, organizers expect over 5,000 attendees and 250 exhibitors.

[Meeting Energy Reduction Requirements, It Can Be Done](#) — May 21, New York, N.Y.
A workshop focusing on the challenges of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Executive Order 13423, and the Energy and Independence Security Act of 2007.

[34th IEEE Photovoltaic Specialists Conference](#) — June 7-12, Philadelphia, Pa.
Conference will present groundbreaking research papers on all aspects of photovoltaic-relevant materials, devices, systems and applications. The deadline for electronic abstract submission was Jan. 14, 2009.

[2009 International Fuel Ethanol Workshop & Expo](#) — June 15-18, Denver, Colo.
The ethanol industry has developed significantly in recent years. Join industry leaders and participate in business development and networking opportunities.

[2009 Wind Turbine Reliability Workshop](#) — June 17-18, Albuquerque, N.M.
Workshop will identify and examine turbine reliability issues among plant developers, operators, manufacturers and others.

[11th Annual SolWest Renewable Energy Fair](#) — July 24-26, John Day, Ore.
This year's theme is "Alternative Vehicles, Renewable Fuels," and admission includes more than 50 free workshops on both off-grid and grid inter-tied renewable energy and sustainable living topics.

[2009 Annual NACO Conference & Exposition](#) — July 24-28, Nashville, Tenn.
Registration for the 2009 Annual Conference & Exposition opened in late January 2009.

[GovEnergy 2009](#) — Aug. 9-12, Providence, R.I.

A forum to educate, inspire and motivate people and organizations to be more energy efficient in their facilities and to raise awareness and knowledge of latest energy-saving strategies and products.

[GRC 2009 Annual Meeting and GEA Expo](#) — Oct. 4-7, Reno, Nev.

The geothermal energy industry's largest gathering of professionals participating in conference sessions, educational seminars, a trade show exhibition and tours of local geothermal projects.

[2009 Solar Decathlon](#) — Oct. 9-18, Washington, D.C.

Next edition of this popular DOE-sponsored showcase for solar-powered, energy efficient homes designed and constructed by university teams from North America and Europe.

[Solar Power International \(formerly listed as Solar Power 2009\)](#) — Oct. 27-29, Anaheim, Calif.

The largest solar power conference in the United States about the U.S. solar industry and market opportunities, sponsored by the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) and the Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA).

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