

## EERE Program News

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**December, 2008**

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At Disney World, Cinderella's Castle glistens with 200,000 LEDs this holiday season.

photo courtesy of: [Garth Vaughan, Walt Disney World](#)

Some people question whether renewable energy development will keep up the pace in 2009, given lower oil prices and continuing weakness in global financial markets.

[Features](#) offers a round-up of viewpoints on this, gathering articles from both within and without the energy industry.

Please use our "[comments](#)" link to agree, disagree or share your own thoughts on what lies ahead for renewables and energy efficiency in 2009.

[News](#) shares some thoughts from Dr. Steven Chu, the next administration's DOE secretary nominee.

The section also introduces a new National Action Plan stressing energy efficiency and links to new DOE public service announcements about saving energy and money this winter.

We also look at the increasing use of light emitting diodes (LEDs) in holiday decorations, an energy saving technology with huge potential.

[Disney LED Video](#)

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### Meet Dr. Steven Chu, DOE secretary nominee



Dr. Steven Chu, Director of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, has been nominated by President-elect Obama to be the next U.S. Secretary of Energy.

photo courtesy of: LBNL

Dr. Steven Chu, director of DOE's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), has been nominated by President-elect Barack Obama to be the next U.S. secretary of energy.

Speaking last year at a UC Berkeley Guest Lecture Series, Dr. Chu summed up his beliefs about science, human potential and energy. He quoted William Faulkner, the 1950 Nobel Laureate in Literature, who said:

"...I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."

Dr. Chu then went on to say, "With these virtues, the world can and will prevail over this great energy challenge.

"Aggressive support of energy science and technology, coupled with incentives that accelerate the concurrent development and deployment of innovative solutions, can transform the entire landscape of energy demand and supply.

"What the world does in the coming decade will have enormous consequences that will last for centuries; it is imperative that we begin without further delay."

For more on Dr. Chu's thoughts about energy policy, see:

[Director's page. LBNL Web site](#)

[\(VIDEO and AUDIO\) Lehrer NewsHour: "Physicist Searches for Alternative Fuel Technologies"](#)

[\(VIDEO\) Speech about energy future and climate change](#)

[Autobiography written at the time of winning the Nobel Prize for Physics](#)

**[Comments:](#)**

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## **Small wind turbines on Mall for Presidential Inauguration**



More home owners, particularly in remote areas, are exploring small wind turbines for residential use.

photo courtesy of: [YouCanGoGreen](#)

Visitors to Washington, D.C. for President-elect Obama's Inauguration will be able to view [residential-scale wind turbines](#) on display at the U.S. Botanical Gardens on the Mall.

Today's small wind turbine systems, large enough to power an average home, cost about \$30,000, with some systems ranging from \$10,000 to \$70,000.

The good news is that a [federal-level investment tax credit \(ITC\)](#) is now available to consumers wanting to purchase small wind turbines for home, farm or business use.

Owners of small wind systems with 100 kilowatts (kw) of capacity and less can receive a credit for 30 percent of the total installed cost of the system, not to exceed \$4,000.

For residential turbines, the credit is additionally limited to the lesser of \$4,000 or \$1,000 per kw of capacity.

The ITC, written into law through the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, is available for equipment installed from Oct. 3, 2008 through Dec. 31, 2016.

Some states and localities also have [incentive programs for small wind turbines](#).

[Additional information about small wind turbines](#)

[Permitting guide for small wind turbines](#)

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## **National Action Plan stresses energy efficiency**

More than 60 energy, environmental and state policy leaders from across the country have come together with DOE and the Environmental Protection Agency to produce the updated [National Action Plan Vision for 2025: A Framework for Change](#).



The relationship between the global environment and today's energy choices hold major consequences for the world of tomorrow.

photo courtesy of: DOE/EPA

The action plan outlines strategies to help lower growth in energy demand across the country by more than 50 percent, and shows ways to save more than \$500 billion in net savings over the next 20 years. These actions may also help reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 90 million vehicles.

### **Comments:**

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## **Hear new DOE home winterization tips**

DOE has sent home winterization public service announcements (PSAs) to over 400 radio stations across the country.

Three audio PSAs are designed to help homeowners and renters cut winter heating bills through energy efficiency savings posted on DOE's [Stay Warm, Save Money Web site](#).

Listeners are encouraged to visit the DOE web site to learn more about how home sealing, insulation, and compact fluorescent lighting (CFL) can be used to save energy in new and existing homes.

Air Leaks/Home sealing PSA ([WAV 6 MB](#)) ([Windows Media File 295 KB](#))

Insulation PSA ([WAV 6 MB](#)) ([Windows Media File 291 KB](#))

Compact Fluorescent Lighting PSA ([WAV 7 MB](#)) ([Windows Media File 322 KB](#))

[\(Video\) energy savers TV news spot](#)

### **Comments:**

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## **Spectacle of LEDs glisten this holiday season**

If you walk down the street to gaze at the wonderland of holiday lights, it's increasingly likely you are being captivated by the use of energy-efficient LEDs, otherwise known as light emitting diodes.

LEDs can last up to 100,000 hours, and they use far less electricity than traditional incandescent light bulbs.

According to DOE, if all U.S. homes used LED holiday lights, the energy savings would be equal to two billion kilowatt-hours, enough to power 200,000 homes for one year.

One of the most phenomenal displays of these energy efficient lights is at Walt Disney World in Florida. A total of 200,000 LEDs transforms Cinderella's Castle at night into "magical ice." This amazing spectacle draws the equivalent power of three clothes dryers.

Equally impressive is the use of LEDs in the [Osborne Family Spectacle of Dancing Lights](#) at the Disney Hollywood Studios. Seventy percent of the 5 million vibrant holiday lights used in this display are now LEDs.

Other recognizable displays filled with bright LEDs include the [National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C.](#), which for the first time in its history, features only LEDs, 45,000 of them to be exact, with the exception of the ornaments. The tree is also 50 percent more energy efficient than last year's display.

It isn't just large corporations or governments that are saving energy with holiday LEDs. A general manager for the utility company in [Oconomowoc, Wis. estimates by purchasing more than 600 strands of LED lights for the small city's holiday displays](#) – even at a cost of \$6,000 – payback will come quickly with an estimated energy savings of \$2,600 a year.

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## **Features**



Some experts believe the recent drop in oil prices, coupled with the global financial downswing, may hurt renewable energy financing efforts in 2009.

Graphic courtesy of: Texas State Energy Conservation Office

### **Price pressures on renewable energy in 2009**

Oil at \$50. Global trade slowing. Weakness in financial markets. The U.S. in recession.

How will all this affect wind and solar energy development in 2009?

Will growth in renewable energy development slow?

Will cheaper gasoline dampen U.S. consumers' newly found ardor for fuel efficient cars?

Will the new administration push through a stimulus bill giving renewable energy and energy efficiency a major boost?

Unanswerable questions at this point, but vital to consider.

Features starts with what's likely to happen in overall energy markets during 2009, then explores what some analysts and opinion-makers say is ahead for renewables and energy efficiency in the coming months.

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### **Current U.S. energy outlook**

[DOE's Energy Information Administration projects the current global economic slowdown to be more severe and last longer than previously assumed.](#)



World demand for petroleum has dropped sharply in recent months, putting downward pressure on prices.

photo courtesy of: [city-data.com](http://city-data.com)

- World real gross domestic product (GDP) growth — the most significant driver of energy demand — hit about 4 percent in 2006 and 2007. This year GDP will drop to about 2.8 percent, and in 2009 is projected to plummet to around 0.5 percent.
- Here at home, the 2008 annual average price of West Texas Intermediate crude oil was about \$100 per barrel. For 2009, that price is projected to drop to \$51 per barrel.
- Average U.S. price for a gallon of regular grade gasoline is currently about \$1.70. Diesel fuel now costs about \$2.50 per gallon. The price of both fuels has dropped about \$2 per gallon since July.
- During 2009, the annual average retail price of gasoline is projected to be \$2.03 per gallon. Diesel is likely to cost \$2.47 per gallon.
- During the current heating season (October through March), residential heating oil price is projected to average \$2.53 per gallon, down 24 percent from a year earlier.
- Residential natural gas prices this winter are projected to average about \$12.56 per thousand cubic feet (Mcf), down 1.3 percent from last winter.
- The Henry Hub natural gas spot price is projected to decline from an average of \$9.17 per Mcf in 2008 to \$6.25 per Mcf in 2009.

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### **"Pickens Wind Plan" on hold, but not cancelled**

As one of the most publicized endorsements of wind energy development in 2008, and as an indicator of increased public interest in renewable energy, many have asked what's happening with T. Boone Pickens' plan to develop massive megawatts of wind-generated electricity in Texas.

The [Dallas News](#) reports that, "Mesa Power, Mr. Pickens' power generation company, hasn't cancelled a \$2 billion order with the General Electric Co. for 667 turbines, to be delivered in 2010. But Mr. Pickens can't finance the massive wind farm as quickly as planned.

"It's like my father once said. There are three reasons we can't do it: The first one is we don't have the money, and it doesn't make a difference about the other two," Mr. Pickens said in a telephone interview.

Pickens also said, "The credit crisis is hurting the project, and a drop in natural gas prices only makes it worse. Wholesale power prices follow natural gas prices, and a decline in those markets makes new power generation less appetizing for investors."

[Video: Pickens on His Energy Plan Slowdown \(CNBC News Interview\)](#)

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## International Energy Agency sees strong future for renewables

[Renewable energy coming out of the current economic downturn even stronger \(International Herald Tribune\):](#)

"The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that green energy will be the second largest source of global electricity generation before 2015.



Texans are increasingly seeing wind energy as one of the state's most important energy resources.

photo courtesy of: New York Times

"...IEA expects [renewable energy technologies] to overtake natural gas to become the second-largest source of electricity by 2015.

"Excluding biomass, non-hydro renewable energy sources — Wind, solar, geothermal, tide and wave energy — together will grow faster than any other source worldwide, at an average rate of 7.2 percent per year over the projection period," the agency said.

"Renewable energy trade associations for solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower [have] said there are a wide range of potential investors such as pension funds and non-profit organizations that would invest if Congress tweaks tax and production credits to make them refundable.

"It's just that the economics are just not there with respect to financing. If you free that up, you'll see record growth for solar in particular in the United States in 2009," said Rhone Resch, president of the [Solar Energy Industries Association \(SEIA\)](#).

[Renewable energy, scarred but stronger \(Forbes.com\)](#)

"The alternative energy sector has run smack into a credit crisis, probably a recession as well, and almost all industry experts think the fourth quarter is going to be worse. Yet many believe it could emerge from the economic turmoil scarred but stronger...."

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## Renewable energy is a "Go"

[The signal is still green \(Livemint.com-WSJ\):](#)



Even as central banks struggle to unfreeze global credit markets, the need to develop clean, renewable energy intensifies.

photo courtesy of: Bloomberg News

"The case for going green [with clean energy] is getting stronger—despite the anticipation that the global economic downturn would hurt investments in renewable energy.

"Halving of oil prices is clearly a disincentive for investing in alternative fuels....

"[But] private capital is unlikely to stay away [from renewable energy] for long, even though it will be risk-averse in the short term. But the significant thing today is if governments see green spending as high priority or even viable in light of the economic crisis."

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### **Mixed signals for renewable energy development**

[Gathering clouds \(Economist.com\):](#)

"Big American utilities are slashing their investments in alternative energy.

"Florida Power & Light has cut its planned investment in wind power next year by 400 megawatts.

"Duke Energy of North Carolina has lopped \$50m off its budget for solar power.

"And on October 31st VeraSun Energy, one of America's biggest ethanol producers, was caught out by gyrations in the prices of corn and petrol (gasoline), filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

"In the European Union the price of carbon permits has fallen from a high of almost €30 in July to around €20 [Nov. 6], making clean-tech investments less attractive.

"But Michael Liebreich, the boss of New Energy Finance, expects total investments in clean energy to fall only slightly in 2008, thanks to a strong performance in the first part of the year.

"Venture-capital and private-equity investments actually rose slightly in the third quarter.

"The price of oil aside," he said, "the issues that stoked interest in clean tech, including global warming and energy security, are as prominent as ever."

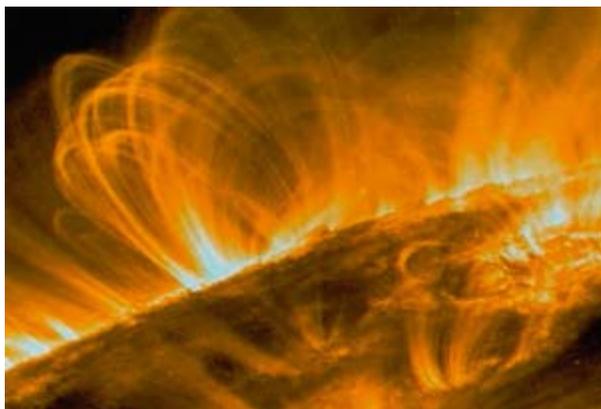
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### **Ray of light for solar power**

[Solar shines in dark economy \(marketwatch.com\):](#)

"[U.S. solar] industry experts are predicting a 40 percent increase in demand for residential and commercial solar installations in 2009.



**Government and utility incentives should keep U.S. solar energy development on a strong growth track during 2009.**

photo courtesy of: [Treehugger.com](http://Treehugger.com)

"The boom is due mainly to increased government tax incentives and subsidies for renewable resources.

"As of January 1, 2009 all Americans will be eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit on solar technology. That's in addition to individual state tax credits, which are as high as 25 percent in regions that are pushing for a greener economy.

"I am proposing we set the most aggressive target in the nation for 33 percent renewable energy by the year 2020," California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced recently. "That's a third of our energy from sources like solar, wind and geothermal."

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## **Why green energy makes sense**

[The 10 big energy myths \(Guardian.com, UK\)](#)

Anyone doubting the future of renewable energy should read this article. Writer, Chris Goodall, gives his views why he believes the primary myths thrown up in opposition to renewable energy make little sense.

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## **International analysts see stress in solar panel manufacturing**

[Solar sector shakeout looms as credit crunch bites \(Reuters\)](#)

"In our view, too much solar capacity has been added relative to demand, and will lead to oversupply," Goldman Sachs analysts wrote, adding that the consequences would drive module prices down by about 15 percent next year.

Oversupply and an easing of demand as economies slow will help the cost of photovoltaic solar energy fall in line with the cost of conventional electricity -- so-called "grid parity" -- which will ultimately give the sector a boost, but not before many companies have fallen by the wayside.

A toxic mix of tight credit and falling prices will make it especially perilous for those solar companies with weak cash flows and high debt.

"On a global average, three out of four (solar energy) companies will not make it," said Robert Schramm, analyst at Germany's Commerzbank....

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## **EERE News Releases**

Dec. 8, 2008

[Departments of State and Energy Establish Global Partnership to Green U.S. Embassies and Consulates](#)

Dec. 3, 2008

[DOE Announces up to \\$29.3 Million in Projects for Research, Development, and Demonstration of Alternative Vehicle Technologies](#)

Nov. 19, 2008

[DOE Announces Expansion and Solicitation for Entrepreneur in Residence Program](#)

Nov. 18, 2008

[Changing the Climate: Looking Towards a More Cost Effective, Energy Efficient Future](#)

Nov. 14, 2008

[DOE Reaches Agreement with LG Electronics, USA, On Refrigerator Energy Matter](#)

Nov. 5, 2008

[U.S. Department of Energy Issues Rules for Auto Loan Program](#)

Oct. 29, 2008

[DOE Extends Application Deadline for Renewable Energy Loan Guarantee Solicitation](#)

Oct. 23, 2008

[White House Honors Federal Agency Teams For Saving Energy and Reducing Energy Costs](#)

Oct. 22, 2008

[DOE Announces 2008 Federal Energy and Water Management Awards](#)

Oct. 17, 2008

[ENERGY STAR® Operation Change Out Initial Results Save Nearly \\$11 Million in Energy Costs at 84 U.S. Military Bases](#)

Oct. 7, 2008

[DOE Announces Additional Steps in Developing Sustainable Biofuels Industry](#)

October 6, 2008

[DOE Funds 21 Research, Development and Demonstration Projects for up to \\$78 Million to Promote Enhanced Geothermal Systems](#)

Oct. 1, 2008

[DOE's Energy Savers Web Site Helps Consumers "Stay Warm, Save Money"](#)

Sept. 30, 2008

[DOE's Clean Cities Celebrates Success of Alternative Fuels](#)

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## **Reader Comments**

### **November issue — \$25 billion available for fuel efficient vehicles**

Why are we continuing to fund gasoline vehicles when fuel cell vehicles are available, non-polluting, efficient, economically desirable and inevitable by most estimates?

We need only begin investing in hydrogen fueling stations and infrastructure to begin the hydrogen revolution so

why reinvent the wheel?

Our economy needs a boost and what better method than to begin replacing 400 Million automobiles?

Nobody expects a turn-key operation but we must start somewhere at sometime!

— **R.F.**

### **November issue — Consumers warm to energy efficiency**

It was in the late seventies that I had the chance to rehab a one story house on the East Side of Buffalo, New York. The recommended list of energy efficiency ideas at that time included use of thermal insulation, triple glazed windows, new water heating systems, and appliances that had a high energy efficiency rating.

Now we no longer live in the era of disco; yet the majority of the buildings in this country are still antiquated and energy inefficient. Why is it that we have not progressed any further than this?

Why does all of the talking and debating lead us no where; why does the solution still seem so illusive?

— **K.**

### **November issue — Release of the National Biofuels Action Plan**

We have to move away from relying on food-based ethanol and move to waste-based ethanol, such as using the whole corn plant instead of just the corn kernel.

We are going to put ourselves into a food shortage position.

— **M.F.**

### **November issue — general comment**

We need a National Energy Library to deploy energy innovations.

Leaders interested in energy transformation can take a lesson from America's rapid deployment of innovative medical technologies. America's spectacular success in fielding new medical technologies is anchored in the innovative Web resources of the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

The NLM supplies vast amounts of innovation information to America's scientists, doctors and consumers.

Currently, there is no National Energy Library to do for energy innovation what NLM does for medicine.

The Department of Energy does have a miniature version of NLM, in its Office of Scientific and Technical Information or OSTI. In fact OSTI has been a pioneer in developing new ways to deliver energy information via the Web. But OSTI's budget is a ridiculous \$9 million, compared to NLM's \$350 million.

What we need is a National Energy Library, at a scale comparable to the National Library of Medicine, doing the job of deploying energy innovation.

— **D.W.**

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## **Speeches, Op-Eds and Testimony**

Dec. 2, 2008

[Dedication of the Joint BioEnergy Institute](#): Remarks as Prepared for Secretary Bodman

"[To meet] requirements of the Energy Independence and Security Act, we need to go from zero to 21 billion gallons of advanced renewable fuels in less than 15 years.

"And we need to do this in a sustainable way. America can—indeed is—displacing some of the transportation fuels used everyday with alternative fuels like corn-based ethanol and biodiesel. The challenge before us is to find ways to develop a new generation of biofuels, including fuels made from cellulose, algae and other non-food products. And fuels that are compatible with the existing energy infrastructure like renewable diesel, green gasoline and bio-butanol...."

Nov. 19, 2008

[Atlantic Green Intelligence Forum](#): Remarks as Prepared for Secretary Bodman:

"We have aggressively funded advanced technology development through public-private partnerships, in areas like advanced biofuels (to the tune of over \$1 billion since the start of 2007), solar photovoltaics, wind power,

advanced batteries for plug-in electric hybrids, hydrogen fuel cells, and advanced nuclear technologies, to name just a few. We have also made available over \$42 billion in loan guarantees aimed at getting large-scale clean-energy projects built as quickly and efficiently as possible...."

Oct. 7, 2008

[National Biofuels Action Plan](#): remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Secretary Bodman:

"...We cannot sustain the level of biofuels production needed to meet our future energy requirements if we continue to rely solely on ethanol derived from food stocks like corn. We must progress to the next level.... We must accelerate the development and deployment of next generation biofuels, fuels made from cellulose, algae and from other non-food products as well as fuels compatible with our existing energy infrastructure including renewable diesel, green gasoline and bio-butanol...."

### **Comments:**

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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](#)

[2009 Wind Energy Institute](#) — Jan. 21-22, Austin, Texas

Forum will provide the latest technological, business, and legal information regarding wind development. Topics include emerging issues, market conditions, CREZ developments, dispatch priority and citing issues.

[22nd Annual Power and Utilities M&A Symposium](#) — Jan. 26-27, New York, N.Y.

Symposium will explore the challenges currently being faced in finance, value, capital expenditures and national energy policy.

[34th Stanford Geothermal Workshop](#) — Feb. 9-11, Stanford, Calif.

The 34th annual Stanford workshop brings together engineers, scientists and managers involved in geothermal reservoir studies and developments in a forum for the exchange of ideas on the exploration, development and use of geothermal resources.

[14th Annual National Ethanol Conference](#) — Feb. 23-25, San Antonio, Texas

The Renewable Fuels Association will hold its annual ethanol conference with industry leaders discussing state of the industry.

[RETECH 2009](#) — Feb. 25-27, Las Vegas, Nev.

RETECH 2009 is a trade show and business conference; an attendance of over 5,000 people is expected, from all areas of renewable energy production, use and marketing.

[Renewable Energy World Conference & Expo North America](#) — Mar. 10-12, Las Vegas, Nev.

The 6th annual conference will offer papers, panel discussions and presentations related to technology, markets, business strategies and policy covering the wind, solar, biomass, hydro, geothermal, ocean/tidal/wave, bio-power, bio-fuels, hydrogen and energy sectors.

[Americana 2009](#) — Mar. 17-19, Montreal, Canada

The 8th biennial International Environmental Technology Trade Show and Conference for exchange of knowledge and know-how and the dissemination of economic and environmental solutions.

[Biomass 2009: Fueling Our Future](#) — Mar. 17-18, Baltimore, Md.

This conference will explore the future role of biofuels in our nation's energy portfolio and the technology, market, and policy advances needed to move toward energy independence and meet aggressive biofuels targets.

[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.

[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 18-21, 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.

[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 is January 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 Annual NACO Conference & Exposition](#) — July 24-28, Nashville, Tenn.

Registration for the 2009 Annual Conference & Exposition will open 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.

[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.

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