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Sunny Outlook for Solar Industry

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Posted by [Neal Leavitt](#) on July 21st, 2013 at 3:43 pm

Walk up and down the aisles of last week's [Intersolar North America](#) conference in San Francisco and the gist generally echoed among exhibitors, attendees, industry analysts and the media is that the future looks bright for the solar industry. In fact, according to [EuPD Research](#), the solar market is poised to add about 3.9 GW of new solar capacity by the end of this year; in the U.S., the grid storage market could hit 4 GW by 2016.

More municipalities in the U.S. are also taking proactive steps in utilizing solar which indirectly demonstrates how they 'market' themselves to their core customers, e.g., the community. Earlier this month, Palo Alto, California, Ground Zero for Silicon Valley, approved 80 megawatts in solar power purchase agreements (PPAs) to meet approximately 18 percent of the city's load. In addition, as reported by [Greentech Media](#), three solar projects slated to be operational by 2017 will generate almost half of the city's renewables; Palo Alto also estimates that meeting its goal of being 100% carbon-neutral will cost each ratepayer about \$3 per year.

But back to the conference - with about 700 exhibitors and 18,000 attendees, Intersolar North America had a little something for everyone. There were a slew of panels, breakfast sessions, and more, appealing to a wide swath of attendees. One event, the *PV Energy World Stage*, focused on production technology- everything from crystalline silicon and roll-to-roll manufacturing of organic solar cells to inkjet processes.

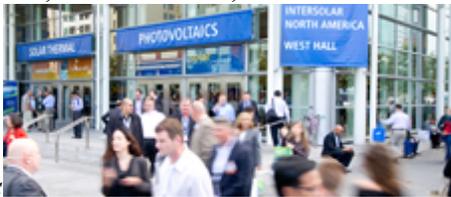
[Solar Power World](#) Editorial Director Frank Andorka attended a breakfast with the *truSolar Initiative*, a consortium of leading solar market participants (panelists included executives from consortium members Assurant Insurance, Distributed Sun, PanelClaw and Underwriters Laboratories) that's trying to establish uniform credit screening standards for commercial and industrial photovoltaic (PV) projects. Andorka said the organization, formed earlier this year, is also trying to develop a common language between the solar industry and financiers that's critical to the future strength of the industry. It will also strengthen how the industry markets itself to customers.

Another panel session comprised entirely of solar industry CEOs, said the solar industry will be characterized over the next few years by increased diversification in terms of both geography and market segment.

As reported by *Intersolar News*, "large-scale utility installations will witness growth in developing regions with surging appetites for energy such as Asia and Africa, but also in the Middle East, which is increasingly turning to solar as a means of preserving its fossil future energy assets for sale abroad, and in the desert regions of the U.S. South and West."

Intersolar News also reported that we'll see an increase of solar to power electric cars. Pierre-Pascal Urbon, CEO of SMA Technology AG, based in Germany, said "people want to connect their PV systems with their house and their cars, and manage both through their smart phones."

Numerous companies used Intersolar North America to debut new products and services. Boulder, CO-based [AlsoEnergy](#), which provides energy monitoring/financial management software solutions for renewable energy developers, manufacturers, and investors, unveiled *PowerOperations*, an operations management workflow



module, and *PowerRes*, a residential packaged designed/tailored for the financial community and developers of residential lease programs for the solar market.

And dozens of companies displayed a wide array of inverters. SMA Technology AG introduced its Sunny Boy TL-US series that, per a press release, represent "an evolutionary leap forward in residential string inverter performance."

While California Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr., indicated in his conference keynote opener that California has set a target of 33% of renewably-sourced energy by 2020, perhaps the potential long-term growth of the solar industry was best summed up by Dan E. Arvizu, director of the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#). Arvizu said over the next decade, photovoltaics will increase tenfold and institutional investors will inject \$2 trillion into PV endeavors.

Looks like sunny days ahead.

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