Solar Engineering & Manufacturing Association Holds Informative July Meeting

The Solar Engineering & Manufacturing Association (SEMA) announces that it held a standing room only meeting on July 14 at the Palomar Hotel in San Francisco in conjunction with the recent Intersolar NA/SEMICON West expos.

A wide range of participants including suppliers, module and cell manufacturers, safety, and government personnel attended the meeting to learn about SEMA's initiatives in both long-term reliability and module traceability. The industry now is producing in excess of 30,000,000 modules per year globally with insufficient data about long-term reliability and limited traceability.

Jasbir Bath, technical committee chairman, reported on SEMA's long-term reliability report, which encompasses reliability, durability, service lifetimes and bankability. This cooperative industry effort will discuss testing, failure mechanisms, and modeling for both modules and inverters, and will be available only to SEMA members.

Matt Holzmann, president of SEMA, then discussed the multi-generational nature of solar modules and installations, where lifetimes are expected to exceed 25 years. With a wide range of module types and specifications, it is essential to be able to identify electrical and other specifications rapidly in order to address warranty and lifetime issues, code enforcement, safety, field service, and recycling. With more than 700 companies worldwide manufacturing modules and solar products, SEMA has opened the discussion of some form of international traceability standard and welcomes all stakeholders to participate.

Jon Custer-Topai of The Custer Consulting group then delivered the keynote of the meeting with an evaluation of the status and prospects of the solar power manufacturing industry. Topics discussed included:
• An overview of general and solar photovoltaic business conditions
• Where the solar industry supply chain is on the current business cycle
• What is driving the industry
• An analysis and 2011 forecast based on global historical data and leading indicators that include industrial production by region, global purchasing manager's index and electronic equipment shipments

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