



April 23, 2010

Assembly Approved Wisconsin Energy Employment Act to Benefit Orion Energy Systems, State of Wisconsin

Bill to Add Technologies Like Orion's Solar Light Pipe to Help State Reduce Dependence on Fossil Fuels

MANITOWOC, Wis., Apr 23, 2010 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX News Network) -- Forward-thinking legislation that would recognize the sun as a renewable energy source is a stroke of the pen away from becoming included in the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard, or RPS.

The Assembly approved, fittingly on Earth Day, the Wisconsin Energy Employment Act with a voice vote. The legislation will now go to Gov. Jim Doyle for his signature, which will make the bill a law.

The bill is designed to expand the technologies defined as renewable in the state's RPS, including solar light pipes, like those manufactured by Manitowoc-based Orion Energy Systems Inc. (NYSE Amex:OESX).

Orion's Apollo(R) solar light pipe harvests daylight and directs it to a facility floor using no electricity for up to 10 hours a day, reducing a customer's light-related energy costs to zero and in turn significantly reducing demand on the electrical grid during peak hours.

In addition to adding new and innovative technology to the state's RPS, the legislation is designed to put people back to work, according to state representatives Ted Zigmunt, D-Francis Creek, and Jim Soletski, D-Green Bay, who co-authored the Assembly bill. The Senate on Tuesday approved the same legislation, authored there by Sens. Jeff Plale, D-South Milwaukee, Rob Cowles, R-Allouez, and Joe Leibham, R-Sheboygan.

"This bipartisan legislation will put people back to work across the state of Wisconsin," Zigmunt said. "The jobs created will range from manufacturing to construction, administration and sales to installation."

"This legislation will help Wisconsin become a leader in energy efficiency by recognizing the technologies that can help it reduce its dependence on fossil fuels," said Orion CEO Neal Verfueth. "This act will also create jobs and reduce costs to companies statewide, strengthening our economy -- all while improving the environment, something that affects everyone."

"This is a great day for Orion, the state of Wisconsin and the environment."

The bill has been heavily supported by labor organizations, including the AFL-CIO, carpenters unions, electrical workers, and operating engineers. In a strange political twist, the state's largest businesses also supported the Wisconsin Energy Employment Act.

The act is expected to create jobs by adding new technologies, such as "light pipes, biomass, biogas, geothermal, synthetic gas, and certain fuel pellets that will count toward meeting our state's current renewable energy standards." When used as an alternative to traditional power plant produced electricity, these alternative renewable sources can be used to fulfill a utility's renewable resource requirement.

Doyle recommended that Orion's Apollo(R) solar light pipes be included as a qualifying technology in the state's RPS after he saw the benefits of the technology firsthand during a tour of Orion's Manitowoc manufacturing center.

It is estimated that the new renewable status for Orion's Apollo(R) light pipe technology will generate 2.8 million hours of installation work for the construction industry, an area of the economy with high unemployment. These construction jobs will be developed throughout the state.

In addition, there will be an unknown number of new manufacturing jobs developed at Orion to accommodate increased demand.

According to Zigmunt, "Another result of the Earth Day legislation will be the construction of a state-of-the-art energy recycling and recovery facility in Brown County that would convert a city's waste stream into fuel pellets."

"Beyond the jobs needed to construct the facility, at least 30 full-time jobs will be created to operate the waste-to-energy

process. In addition, these facilities can be replicated throughout Wisconsin, not only giving the state's electric utilities clean renewable fuel, but also dramatically reducing the amount of waste citizens and businesses must pay to landfill.

"Greenwood Fuels, a waste-to-fuel pellet manufacturer located in Green Bay, hopes to expand its employee base by 20 full-time jobs as a result of the legislation. The company currently employs 26 full-time workers.

"Also on the drawing board is a plasma gasification renewable energy project for Milwaukee. The plant, to be built by Alliance Federated Energy, will generate electric and thermal energy, also drawing from the city's waste stream.

"The construction of the facility will create up to 150 construction jobs in Milwaukee and employ 50 full-time workers once operational."

Numerous jobs also are expected to be created as a result of solar hot water heating and geo thermal technologies, also included in the Wisconsin Energy Employment Act.

For more information, contact Kevin Crawford, Orion Energy Systems' senior vice president of corporate communications and government affairs, at (920) 917-9119.

Orion has deployed its energy management systems in 5,374 facilities across North America, including 123 of the Fortune 500 companies. Since 2001, Orion technology has displaced more than 504 megawatts, saving customers more than \$782 million and reducing indirect carbon dioxide emissions by 6.7 million tons.

Orion Energy Systems Inc. (NYSE Amex:OESX) is a leading power technology enterprise that designs, manufactures and implements energy management systems, consisting primarily of high-performance, energy-efficient lighting platforms, intelligent wireless control systems and direct renewable solar technology for commercial and industrial customers without compromising their operations. For more information, visit www.oesx.com.

The Orion Energy Systems, Inc. logo is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=4540>

This news release was distributed by GlobeNewswire, www.globenewswire.com

SOURCE: Orion Energy Systems, Inc.

CONTACT: Orion Energy Systems, Inc.
Media Contact
Linda Diedrich, Vice President Corporate Communications
(920) 482-1988
ljd@oes1.com

(C) Copyright 2010 GlobeNewswire, Inc. All rights reserved.

News Provided by COMTEX