



Kevin Ross

A Bright Future

Considering the transition to solar power

In the water/wastewater industry, much emphasis has been placed recently on energy efficiency, as energy costs are rising for plants around the country. Converting to renewable energy may be the last thing on plant managers' minds right now, but Kevin Ross, project manager for SunPower Corp., a global solar energy provider, talked with WWD Managing Editor Clare Pierson about why water agencies should make it a priority.

Clare Pierson: Why is solar power important for water plants and agencies to consider?

Kevin Ross: Electricity is typically the single biggest portion of a utility's operating budget. As we all know, these costs in particular are going up and escalating—in some regions, very quickly—and that has a huge impact on these operating plants who would prefer to not have to pass those costs on to ratepayers.

Secondly, the carbon-offset legislation in California and other pieces of similar legislation around the country are going to impact all of us, but definitely these water plants. Many are realizing they should have a strategy in place to mitigate these compliances. And so a solar system on site addresses not only cost, but also allows them to take advantage of renewable energy credits that come with it.

Pierson: What would you say to water utilities that are interested in solar power, but perhaps have more timely needs, such as repairing infrastructure?

Ross: First, I would say they should utilize their site to have the least amount of impact on their operation. One benefit of SunPower technology is that it has a high efficiency in energy per square foot; this is good for space-constrained situations.

Secondly, we provide financing options. SunPower offers a number of different methods for water agencies to acquire a system. One of the ways that is quite popular is a power-purchase agreement (PPA). A PPA directly addresses utilities that have no capital dollars because they're converting to ozone or something else. The structure of a PPA is that SunPower becomes not only the designer and builder, but also the owner and operator. The water agency then purchases only the energy the system produces, on an hourly basis. A monthly bill comes in the mail just like other bills. That way no capital requirement is required—it just comes out of their operating budget.

Pierson: What have been some of SunPower's notable water agency installations so far?

Ross: We are just finishing up a project in southern California, the Inland Empire utility agency in Chino, Calif. They have a number of operating sites, and they chose to hire us to put solar in four of their plants, for a total of 3.5 megawatts (MW). Expected savings for the first year for their combined sites is \$200,000.

We also completed a 3.1-MW implementation at the Las Vegas Valley Water District, a six-site project. They estimate to be able to reduce CO₂ emissions by 38,000 lb over the next 30 years.

Pierson: The "green" industry has been making a big splash lately and certainly solar power is a part of that, but is the faltering economy affecting your business at all?

Ross: Financial conditions are putting pressure on everybody. One of the benefits that SunPower has is we have a massive amount of experience. We've put around 500 systems in the ground, representing 400 MW total around the globe. That speaks to our scale, our vertical integration, the fact that we operate in numerous markets and offer not only distribution but actual design-build-operate, turnkey systems. We are very well differentiated and diversified and continue to see a strong interest from customers.

The sales cycle is getting longer, certainly, which it is for everybody. The saving-money aspect drives interest, and we are constantly seeing people wanting to get educated about solar power. The future looks very good for us, relative to that pipeline of interest that exists. **WWD**

Kevin Ross is a project development manager for SunPower Corp. Ross can be reached at 949.581.6022 or by e-mail at kevin.ross@sunpowercorp.com.

Clare Pierson is managing editor for *Water & Wastes Digest*. Pierson can be reached at 847.391.1012 or by e-mail at cpierson@sgcmail.com.

For more information, write in 1115 on this issue's Reader Service Card.

WEBresources >>>

Related search terms from www.waterinfoink.com: solar power, energy, operating costs

For more information related to this article, visit www.wwdmag.com/lm.cfm/wd020915

Growth Predicted for Sludge Treatment & Odor Control



The global market for sludge treatment and odor control technology

will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 4.6% from \$4.6 billion in 2008 to \$5.8 billion in 2013, according to a recent report by BCC Research.

In North America, the odor control treatment market is expected to grow to more than \$968 million in 2013, while the sludge treatment market will grow to nearly \$734 million, the report concluded.

Infrastructure Investment Could Create 400,000 Jobs



The American Water Works Association is urging Congress to include funding for drinking water infrastructure projects in any

stimulus legislation being considered.

More than \$10 billion in drinking water infrastructure projects across the nation can be underway as soon as funds are committed, and it would put more than 400,000 Americans to work.

Groups Partner For Water Efficiency Research



Five national organizations are joining forces in a partnership to develop research programs to assist in the development and use of water-efficient plumbing.

The five groups that are part of the agreement are the Alliance for Water Efficiency; the International Code Council; the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials; the Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling Contractors Association and the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute.

Shreveport, La., Approves Computerized Meters



The city of Shreveport, La., will sell \$10 million in bonds to get computerized meters for 3,200 large commercial water customers, *The Associated Press (AP)* reported. The city is losing \$350,000 annually, officials say, because 14 billion gal of water get by the current meters.

Opponents think the city may have to raise rates if it cannot pay back the bond money. The new meters will bring in enough new revenue to pay off the bonds without raising rates, according to Operational Services Director Mike Strong.

Appeals Court Upholds Milwaukee Sewer Lawsuit

An appeals court ruled that the



Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) must pay

E-L Enterprises, Inc. for damaging the structure of its building during a construction project, the *AP* reported. The taxpayer-funded MMSD will have to pay \$624,000 plus attorney's fees.

E-L Enterprises filed the suit in 2004, saying MMSD's construction of a sewer line beneath its building caused extensive structural damage. Last year, a jury agreed the project drained groundwater beneath the building, causing wood pilings to rot and the building to settle.

Oregon State Researchers Improve Wastewater Drug Test



Oregon State University researchers say they have improved a monitoring system for detecting drugs in wastewater, the *AP* reported.

The testing system saves time and money and decreases the risk of contamination by eliminating the need for sample preparation.

The system, which also measures use of pharmaceutical drugs, can be useful for determining the extent of illegal drug use in entire communities by testing water at municipal treatment plants.

WWD, Nelik to Co-Sponsor PumpTec-2009



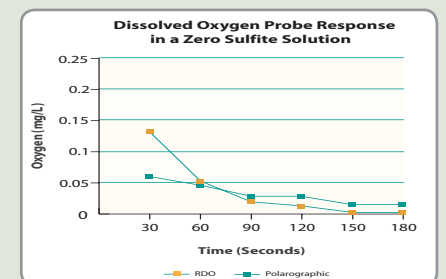
Water & Wastes Digest and Dr. Lev Nelik, P.E., are

sponsoring PumpTec-2009, the 5th Annual Pump Theory-and-Hands-on Maintenance and Reliability Conference, to be held Sept. 14 to 15 at the Holiday Inn Select in Norcross (Atlanta), Ga.

The conference will feature training on a variety of pump types, styles and brands. Participants will learn how to assemble and troubleshoot to improve reliability and extend pump life. Efficiency and energy savings will also be discussed.

For more information and to register online, visit www.pumpconference.com.

Figure Correction



In the "Accuracy Matters" application study on page 66 of the December 2008 issue of *WWD*, the colors displayed on the legend for the figure titled "Dissolved Oxygen Probe Response in a Zero Sulfite Solution" were incorrect. RDO sensor readings should be represented in orange and polarographic sensor readings should be represented in blue. The figure with the correct legend appears above. **WWD**

News compiled by Rebecca Wilhelm

FOR DAILY NEWS UPDATES VISIT WWW.WWDMAG.COM