

Evonik and SolarWorld Open New Solar Silicon Plant—New Production Process with Impressive Energy-Saving Features

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Rheinfelden, Germany – Evonik Industries and SolarWorld have officially opened their new solar silicon plant in Rheinfelden (Baden, Germany). As part of the joint venture Joint Solar Silicon (JSSI), the two companies are using an innovative process in the new plant that enables energy savings of up to 90 percent compared to conventional solar silicon production. “With the opening of the plant, Evonik Industries is answering the worldwide demand to increase the share of alternative energies further, such as solar energy, in power generation,” says Dr. Alfred Oberholz, member of Evonik’s Executive Board. The investment volume for the integrated production network will range in the double-digit millions of euros.

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JSSI is a joint venture of Evonik Industries AG, Essen (51 percent) and SolarWorld AG, Bonn. “With JSSI, we are consistently expanding our activities in raw materials supply,” says certified engineer Frank H. Asbeck, SolarWorld’s chairman of the board, stressing the importance of the new plant for his company. “We manufacture ultra-thin wafers from solar silicon, and process them into solar cells and modules.” For Asbeck, one thing is certain: “In a few years, solar power from your rooftop will be cheaper than power from an electrical outlet.”

Michael Müller, Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Environment Ministry, welcomes the companies’ investment in Rheinfelden. “It’s good that photovoltaics are taking us out of the niche and into comprehensive industrial added value.”

The integrated production network includes an Evonik monosilane plant. In the second plant in the network, JSSI takes the monosilane and uses it to manufacture solar silicon. The Rheinfelden facility will start with an annual production capacity of 850 metric tons of solar silicon.

Based on the steady international demand for solar power products, both joint venture partners see a substantial market for the new technology. The process was developed by JSSI in cooperation with leading universities. Currently, the growth of the solar industry is still limited by low raw material capacities. With the new plant, JSSI has come

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considerably closer to satisfying this demand bottleneck and being able to supply the solar industry with high-quality and inexpensive solar silicon.

Photovoltaics and construction of this plant supports one of the fields of concentration identified by Evonik: "Today, energy efficiency is one of the worldwide megatrends. With top technological products, Evonik will contribute to safeguarding the energy supply while protecting the environment and climate," says Oberholz. Evonik is allocating up to two billion euros for this purpose from 2008 to the end of 2010 alone. In the Chemicals Business Area, which includes the site in Baden, Evonik already offers numerous intelligent solutions that are helping to conserve resources and reduce emissions.

Evonik has already been successfully involved in the booming photovoltaics market for several years. As recently as 2007, the company signed a contract for construction of an integrated production network with the French company Silicium de Provence (Silpro). The network will produce up to 4,000 metric tons of solar silicon per year. In May 2007, Evonik signed a long-term agreement with PV Silicon, Erfurt, to supply Siridion® chlorosilane to the production plant for 1,800 metric tons of solar silicon, which is currently under construction in Bitterfeld.

Evonik Company information

Evonik Industries is the creative industrial group from Germany which operates in three business areas: Chemicals, Energy and Real Estate. Evonik is a global leader in specialty chemicals, an expert in power generation from hard coal and renewable energies, and one of the largest private residential real estate companies in Germany. Our strengths are creativity, specialization, continuous self-renewal, and reliability. Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In its fiscal year 2007 about 43,000 employees generated sales of about €14.4 billion and an operating profit (EBIT) of more than €1.3 billion.

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