

## Green Energy Plans to Enter Thin-Film Solar Market (Update1)

By Tim Culpan



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Aug. 18 (Bloomberg) -- **Green Energy Technology Inc.**, Taiwan's second-largest maker of solar wafers, will enter the thin-film market this year to benefit from rising global demand for the lighter, lower-cost technology.

Green Energy has already received requests to supply four times the amount of next year's capacity for its new amorphous silicon thin-film solar panels which will begin production in December, **Christine Chen**, spokeswoman for the Taipei-based company said in a phone interview today. Thin films allow the production of larger solar cells than the more common crystalline silicon, which is sliced from ingots of silicon.

Increasing demand for alternative energy sources has prompted Green Energy to expand production capacity in China and Taiwan. Global demand for solar power has climbed an average of 40 percent a year over the past five years as utilities seek ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"Thin film is more environmentally friendly, and we already have some thin film technology through Chunghwa Picture Tubes, so we can ramp up quickly," Chen said. Chunghwa Picture Tubes Ltd., Taiwan's third-largest maker of liquid-crystal displays, is an affiliate of Green Energy through their shared parent company **Tatung Co.**

Green Energy today announced a new \$947 million, eight-year deal to supply crystalline silicon wafers to unnamed customers in Asia and Australia, taking to more than \$2.5 billion the amount of orders it received this year.

### Production Costs

The new thin-film silicon wafer technology has larger gross profit margins, which measures sales less production costs, than crystalline silicon, Chen said, without providing comparative profit data. The price per watt of a solar module made from crystalline silicon wafers is about \$3.80 compared with around \$2.80 for thin-film, she said.

Annual capacity of thin-film wafers will be 30 megawatts by the end of February rising to 50 megawatts by the end of 2009, Chen said. The company has contracted **Applied Materials Inc.**, the world's largest maker of chip-production machinery, to be the major supplier, Chen said, without providing a value for its planned purchases.

**Green Energy** is controlled by San Chih Semiconductor Co., a Taiwan chipmaker that's 85 percent owned by home-appliances manufacturer Tatung.

The shares climbed 1.7 percent to NT\$177 at the close of trade in Taipei after rising as much as 2 percent while the **benchmark Taiex** lost 2.7 percent. The stock has fallen 7.4 percent since it was listed on the Taiwan Stock Exchange on Jan. 25, compared with a 9.6 percent decline in the Taiex over the same period.

Green Energy will spend NT\$900 million (\$9.6 million) to build a factory in Hohot, Inner Mongolia, as part of plans to boost capacity to at least 300 megawatts by the end of 2009 from 200 megawatts currently, Chen said July 21.

**Sino-American Silicon Products Inc.**, based in Hsinchu, is Taiwan's biggest maker of solar wafers.

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*Last Updated: August 18, 2008 02:52 EDT*

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