

The Skinny On Idaho-Built Solar Panels

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A company formed by Boise-based Micron Technology Inc. and Origin Energy of Australia says it plans to start making extremely thin but highly efficient solar cells that will be available next year.

Transform Solar officials say the so-called sliver solar cells will be made at a plant in Boise where Micron once made computer chips, and the cells will be combined into solar panels at another plant owned by Micron in Nampa.

"There is nothing comparable to sliver (cells) on the market," Phil Mackey of Transform Holdings told the Idaho Statesman.

He said Transform Solar has hired 70 employees and expects to hire up to 50 more, with most of the jobs based in southwest Idaho.

Micron and Origin late last year announced the agreement that officials said takes advantage of Origin's experience in energy markets and Micron's expertise in making thin semiconductors.

Mackey said Transform Solar's manufacturing and research will be based in southwest Idaho, and more research and development will be done in Adelaide, Australia.

Company officials say that because the sliver solar cells are so thin, the cost of the silicon used to make them is reduced, allowing the company to be more competitive in the crowded solar energy field.

The company says the cells are less than 50 microns, or less than two-thousandths of an inch, making them the thinnest in production, and bifacial, meaning they can capture sun energy from both faces.

Earlier this month, Transform Solar introduced its sliver technology at the Intersolar trade show in Germany.

Also, Boise Mayor Dave Bieter announced earlier this month that solar panels using the technology will be used in a \$45 million facility proposed by Sunergy World near the Boise Airport that will be able to generate 10 megawatts.

"We've been engaged with Transform since late February and early March," said Mark van Gulik, president of Sunergy World.

Elected leaders in the region are hoping the hiring of workers to build the panels is a sign of better times ahead.

The Skinny On Idaho-Built Solar Panels

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

"Everybody in the state is cautiously hoping we've seen the bottom of this recession," said Nampa Mayor Tom Dale. "This is a turn in the right direction."

Source URL (retrieved on 04/18/2015 - 10:14am):

http://www.impomag.com/news/2010/06/skinny-idaho-built-solar-panels?qt-most_popular=0