



Major contracts signed worldwide with photovoltaic industry leaders

press release

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Air Liquide Electronics

With **3,000 employees** and **€944 million** revenue in 2007, Air Liquide Electronics has activities in **ultra-pure** and **specialty gases**, **new molecules**, **related equipment** and **customized services**.

The Electronics division management is based in Tokyo to enhance its proximity to the semiconductor, TFT-LCD and PV markets in Asia.

Air Liquide is present at **World Future Energy Summit**, Abu Dhabi, UEA, 19 to 21 January 2009.

The solar photovoltaic industry (PV) is experiencing a period of significant volume growth despite the current economic crisis. The challenge for industry leaders is to maintain the trend of lowering manufacturing costs and achieve more efficient processes in order to keep pace with the strong pricing pressure. **New market leaders are emerging** as the industry globalizes and innovation makes inroads through **higher-efficiency crystalline-Si (c-Si) cells** and **new Thin Film technologies**. This will help solar cell manufacturers drive towards achieving cost parity with fossil energy sources

Air Liquide is consolidating its leading position as industrial gases and services supplier to the photovoltaic industry: more than half of the top 10 crystalline-Si solar cell manufacturers, and over 40% of the Thin Film solar cell production fabs worldwide are now Air Liquide customers.

In recent months, **Air Liquide has won more than ten new contracts** in **Europe, the US and Asia**, to supply photovoltaic cell manufacturers representing **4GWp of new planned capacity**. As part of those new long-term agreements, **Air Liquide will invest over €40 million** to supply nitrogen and hydrogen from on-site generators, bulk monosilane, other gases, specialty materials and services.

Air Liquide strengthened and enlarged during 2008 its incumbent position **with Q-Cells SE, the world number one solar cell manufacturer**, by expanding its existing business in the Thalheim Solar Valley Park, **Germany**, where Q-Cells has based six c-Si fabs and three Thin-Film associate companies. It will also begin the supply of all carrier gases and bulk specialty gases to the new Q-cells multi-crystalline plant in **Malaysia**. Q-Cells plans to increase its global production capacity from around 800MWp in 2008 to more than 1.3GWp by the end of 2009.

Air Liquide also expanded its global relationship with **REC Group, the world number one producer of silicon materials** for the solar photovoltaic industry, thanks to a long-term contract to supply carrier gases to REC's new polysilicon manufacturing plants in **Moses Lake, USA**.

In **Nan'Chang, China**, Air Liquide was awarded a major long-term contract by **Best Solar, China's largest solar Thin Film manufacturing project** to date, with planned production capacity of 330MWp. Air Liquide will supply specialty gases, delivery equipment as well as meeting installation needs.

In **Taiwan**, Air Liquide signed a turnkey supply contract with **Sunwell-CMC**, **Taiwan's largest solar Thin Film manufacturer** to date, with current production capacity of 120 MWp.

Francisco Martins, Vice-President Electronics of Air Liquide Group, declared: ***“These significant achievements with solar industry leaders are a key milestone in Air Liquide strategy, confirming our number one position as the supplier of added-value gases and solutions to this industry. Our leadership in deposition gas technology, as well as our ability to provide photovoltaic customers with a roadmap to reduce Cost per Wp, are key contributors to the solar industry's drive towards achieving its grid parity objective, which in turn will drive further growth in this market.***

In the present difficult economic context, the Group continues to invest in long-term growth drivers, such as the Environment and High Tech.”

*With more than **40,000 employees** in **75 countries**, Air Liquide is the **world leader** in industrial and medical gases and related services. The Group offers **innovative solutions** based on constantly enhanced **technologies** and produces **air gases (oxygen, nitrogen, argon, rare gases...)** and **many other gases including hydrogen**. The Group contributes to the manufacturing of **many everyday products**: bubbles in sparkling beverages, protective atmosphere for packed foods, oxygen for hospitals and homecare patients, ultra-pure gases for the semiconductor industry, hydrogen to desulfurize fuels...*

*Air Liquide is committed to **sustainable development** and helps to **protect life**. Founded in 1902, Air Liquide has successfully developed a long-term relationship with its shareholders built on **trust** and **transparency** and guided by the principles of **corporate governance**. Since the publication of its first consolidated financial statements in 1971, Air Liquide has posted **strong and steady earnings growth**. Sales in 2007 totaled **11,801 million euros**, with sales outside France accounting for almost 80%. Air Liquide is listed on the Paris stock exchange and is a component of the CAC 40 and Eurostoxx 50 indices (ISIN code FR 0000120073).*