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EcoMotion Leads 2009 Solar Research Tour to Spain

City Officials, Industry Experts Join EcoMotion Team to Visit World's #2 Solar Country

After a highly successful solar research tour of Germany in 2008, EcoMotion has gathered another group of energy experts for a first-hand look at the second most prolific solar country in the world, Spain. Just two days ago, Spain passed a \$700 billion Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, designed to rein in its recent, dramatic solar growth.

“Experts here agree that solar in Spain is a runaway train, with the two-year growth at 500% of projections,” said Ted Flanigan, President of trip sponsor EcoMotion. “But in light of California’s slow advances, we want to find out exactly what has propelled this growth in Spain.”

Tour members can anticipate a number of policy overviews, research updates, visits to solar sites, and industry updates.

- In Madrid, after an official welcome from Union Fenosa (one of Spain’s big five utilities), tour members will visit the Spanish Solar Energy Industries Association and the University of Madrid, where advanced solar technologies such as multi-junction cells, are being developed at the Institute of Solar Energy.
- On day two the group will visit Sanlucar (near Seville) and Abengoa’s famous solar power tower, an 11 MW installation made up of 684 120-square-meter mirrored heliostats, all beaming photons to a central receiver 115 meters atop the tower.
- On the road from Madrid to Alicante, the group will watch for solar “farms” and wind systems. These installations highlight the difference between Spain’s straight-forward Feed-In Tariff – which pays a fixed price, over a fixed period, for electrical production – compared to California’s Solar Initiative, with its many variables based on on-site rates and consumption patterns. It is this Tariff that has driven the massive growth in the country over the past few years.
- In Alicante and Barcelona, visits are scheduled with “off-grid” homes and commercial establishments, and with OutBack Solar, builder of inverters and battery back-up systems for remote applications.
- A tour of building integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) will illustrate how BIPV can provide shade, cut overheating, and serve as a powerful design element.

As always with EcoMotion’s international study tours, the trip is aimed at exposing American policy-makers and industry experts to the internal workings of countries where renewable energy has been supported by visionary policies and programs.