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In August 2005 **Phonix SonnenStrom AG** opened the first stage of its 5.5 MW solar electricity plant in Bavaria, Germany. So far the new plant consists of 11,616 solar modules with a surface area of more than 56,000 square metres, being equivalent to nearly 12 soccer pitches it is rather large.

**If you think that's big** then the recently announced 20year power purchase agreement between southern California's Edison utility company and Stirling Energy Systems to build a 500MW solar dish park is huge. If a one MW test case is successful, the 20,000 dish thermal park will be constructed over the next four years and will occupy around **1820 hectares**.

**Amazing, the US has a new 'Energy Bill' and by offering tax credits** they are serious, the Energy Policy Act 2005 being signed into law on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August. The new legislation is seen as being generally good for renewables, including an extension of the wind Production Tax credit, a new two-year, 30% investment tax credit, for Solar thermal and PV installations, and for fuel cells. Homes and businesses investing in solar equipment will receive a 30% tax credit worth 30% of the systems cost. The Act offers consumers tax credits for a wide range of energy efficiency improvements in their homes.

**The American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)** stated in its November Third Quarter Market Report that the U.S. wind energy industry will install about 2,500 megawatts (MW) of new wind power this year. A record amount that will help lower skyrocketing home heating and electric bills by reducing the demand for natural gas. There will be 24 farms over nineteen US states.

**Transpower price rises must be justified: Commerce Commission.** On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2005 Transpower, the electricity transmission company that runs the national grid, announced its intention to increase the transmission charges by 19 percent from June 2006, and follow this with annual increases of up to 13 percent a year for a further four years. "The Commerce Commission will not permit Transpower to put in place its announced price increases unless it is satisfied those increases are justified," Commerce Commission Chair Paula Rebstock said. "In the light of previous breaches by Transpower of the price threshold, and the additional increases announced, the Commerce Commission will urgently consider whether it is in the interest of consumers to move to the next step of issuing a notice of intention to declare control of Transpower ," Ms Rebstock said.

**Municipal authorities in Shanghai** are looking at plans to install photovoltaic solar panels on the roofs of 100,000 buildings across the city in an attempt to ease power shortages and reduce pollution from coal burning. Each system would have the capacity of 3-5 kW, together producing 300 – 500 MW of solar power. China is planning to start its first offshore wind farm this year, a 50 MW project in the northern province of Hebei. The plant is expected to expand up

to 100 MW by 2020. While onshore in the Hebei province Guahua will build a 43.5 MW wind farm.

**The Energy Board of Quebec** has authorized eight wind power purchase contracts with two energy developers, clearing the way for nearly 1000 MW of new wind energy to be built. A wind farm project comprising 66 turbines will be built over 25 farms in southern Ontario. While Sancor Energy products will build a 30 MW wind farm near Taber in southern Alberta.

**UK football club Manchester City** has teamed up with Ecotricity to build its very own wind turbine at its stadium in East Manchester. The turbine will supply the energy needs of the stadium and of houses nearby.

**South Korea state run Electric Corporation** has teamed up with eight other energy providers and will invest \$1.1 billion in renewable energy, which according to the country's Energy Ministry will help save the use of 210,000 tonnes of oil, being equivalent to around \$87 million.

**The Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (AP6)** is an initiative by Australia and the US and is by the far the most significant step by the Kyoto 'refuseniks' to address climate change outside the Kyoto process. The January 06 meeting, which also included China, Japan, Korea and India, agreed to establish eight public-private task forces to tackle climate change. In addition, the US and Australia agreed to spend \$130 million together to reduce green house gas emissions by promoting renewables and cleaner ways to use coal.

**Meanwhile in December 05** the signatories to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol finalised an agreement to extend the agreement beyond its first 'commitment' period, which ends in 2012. No new emission targets were agreed, but the final accord has set the process of agreeing future targets in motion.

**US based Wal-Mart Stores** has released its second 'experimental' store to evaluate three on site generation technologies and other environmentally beneficial enhancements. The store draws some of its power from a 50 kW wind turbine, a 134 kW solar power installation and six 60kW microturbines, along with innovations like the solar wall that preheats ventilation air.

**Alstrom has been awarded a \$140 million contract** with Australian energy company Alinta Ltd for the supply of two 172 MW gas turbines for the first stage of a major cogen facility at Alcoa's Wagerup alumina refinery in Australia.

**The 40-hectare campus of American Honda Motor Company's** headquarters will shortly install a CHP system, which is estimated to be able to save more than 30% of the campus energy expenditure each year.