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New Report Examines R&D Needs in Geothermal Exploration and Drilling

Washington, D.C. - A significant amount of the risk associated with geothermal energy lies in uncertainties encountered in exploration and drilling, and a new report outlines the needs and opportunities for research to help address those problems and propel more geothermal energy production. The report, *R&D Needs in Geothermal Exploration and Development*, was prepared by Dan Jennejohn of the Geothermal Energy Association (GEA), the leading US geothermal organization.

"While current technologies can be effective, opportunities to significantly improve upon them and advanced "revolutionary" techniques are possible," noted Jennejohn. At the invitation of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the GEA prepared this report for their Geothermal Summit Meeting at Colorado's Tri-State Generation headquarters in Westminster, Colorado.

The GEA report used a broad approach to the issue and is based upon interviews with many experts in the industry and at universities and national laboratories regarding geothermal exploration and drilling. The paper gives an overview of the various stages of exploration and drilling and addresses areas where significant geothermal R&D needs and opportunities exist. The paper recognizes the potential of breakthrough technologies and EGS as being important areas for R&D. At the same time, the paper also emphasizes focusing R&D on developing conventional technologies that could positively impact the industry in the near term.

"We hope this report helps people understand opportunities for research and technology development in this area," noted Karl Gawell, GEA's Executive Director. "Advances in exploration and drilling technologies are key to expanded geothermal production in the US and around the world."

Current R&D efforts in the geothermal industry have recently received increasing amounts of attention. This last November the Department of Energy announced approximately \$338 million for geothermal research projects, including 24 "Innovative Exploration and Drilling Projects" which will be awarded up to \$98.1 million. The paper identifies those recipients of ARRA funding and their relation to the different exploration and drilling R&D needs being presented.

Copies of the report are available to download free of charge from the GEA Web site at: <http://www.geo-energy.org>.

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