



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **June 5, 2007**

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3TIER scientists stress importance of accurate wind forecasting at WINDPOWER 2007

Ability to accurately forecast wind resources critical to reduce risk for developers, financiers and utilities

LOS ANGELES – Wind developers and financiers should pay attention today to global warming because it will significantly alter wind speeds over the next 30 to 50 years, affecting continued profitability of wind projects, Scott Eichelberger, Ph.D., told attendees at a WINDPOWER 2007 Wind Resource Assessments panel.

“Global warming is not a question, and it is well understood that temperatures will increase as a result,” said Dr. Eichelberger, resource assessment and climate scientist at 3TIER, a renewable energy assessment and forecasting company headquartered in Seattle. “What is not as clear is the way wind patterns will change as a result of climate change. My research focused on where winds are expected to increase, stay the same, or decrease over the next 30 to 50 years.

“For example,” he said, “the large majority of models used in my study predict that wind speeds are expected to increase over the Great Lakes region and decrease over Wyoming and Montana. That’s important information so developers can make more educated decisions about where to locate their wind energy projects and utilities can more accurately plan for the long-term.”

Joining Dr. Eichelberger in making presentations today is Cameron Potter, Ph.D., a power prediction engineer at 3TIER. Dr. Potter also looks to the future of wind forecasting in his presentation, “The Role Very Short-Term Forecasting Will Play in Getting to 20%,” which underscores the increasing importance of accurate forecasting in the wind industry.

“Assessing the effect of climate change on mean wind speed values”
-- Scott Eichelberger, PhD
-- 10:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m.,
June 5
-- Room 408

“The role very short-term forecasting will play in getting to 20%”
-- Cameron Potter, PhD
-- 3:30-5:00 p.m., June 5
-- Room 408

Dr. Potter observes that forecasting traditionally is done hours or days ahead, “so many people do not realize the value of minutes-ahead forecasting. However, minutes-ahead forecasting will play an increasingly important role as companies work toward the industry goal of having 20 percent of energy derived by wind by the year 2020.

“Experience also shows that as wind becomes a larger physical part of power systems, even a small shift in wind speed over a very short time period may have a significant effect on grid operations,” said Dr. Potter. “That’s when minute-to-minute forecasting will become vital,” predicts Dr. Potter in a presentation targeted toward system operators and utility grid controllers.

Reflecting on both presentations, Pascal Storck, 3TIER North America president added, “This research focusing on very long- and very short-term forecasting is a result of 3TIER’s research and development into new predictive tools for our clients. We are always looking for solutions to mitigate the risks associated with a weather driven renewable energy resource, such as wind energy.”

To learn more about 3TIER’s innovative services, products and research, visit Booth #1710 at WINDPOWER 2007. Learn more about 3TIER’s suite of products and services at www.3tiergroup.com.

About 3TIER

3TIER provides project-scale, scientifically-based renewable energy forecast and assessment products and services to organizations worldwide. Founded in 1999, Seattle-based 3TIER is the largest provider of these services in North America and currently forecasts for nearly one-third of all wind energy projects operational today on the North American continent. For more information, visit www.3tiergroup.com.

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