FAU joins in effort to produce renewable power from ocean

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Miami-based Ocean Renewable Power Company is undertaking a pilot ocean current generation project with the help of Florida Atlantic University's Department of Ocean Engineering.

The OCGen technology has the potential for providing reliable base-load renewable power from the Florida Current. The site for the OCGen prototype project will be an area on the western edge of the Florida Current, east of FAU's SeaTech campus, located in Dania Beach.

The Florida Current (commonly referred to as the Gulf Stream) is one of the strongest constantly flowing ocean currents in the world. It flows in a northerly direction and its western edge is only a few miles off the east coast of southern Florida.

With the technical help of FAU, ORPC plans to build and install a commercial scale OCGen(tm) module at the site in early 2008. The module will be lowered to its operating depth and will be tested for a period of 12 months.

During the testing period, key performance parameters will be monitored and data will be collected on currents and the marine environment. The stability and maneuverability of the OCGen module will also be demonstrated.

Dr. Manhar Dhanak, chairman of FAU's Department of Ocean Engineering and Director of SeaTech, commented: "Our department hopes to develop a Center of Excellence in Ocean Energy at SeaTech that will provide facilities for research and development, as well as test and evaluate various methods for harnessing all forms of ocean energy. The OCGen project falls under this category."

"Successful implementation of this pilot project will be an important step in tapping one of the significant sources of the vast renewable ocean energy for a state that is surrounded by the ocean," he added.

"The team of professionals

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we have put together to do this prototype project and the great support we have received from federal, state and local officials, gives us great confidence that this project will be a success." said Chris Sauer, president and CEO of ORPC.

"We have been working diligently for two years to get to this point and we certainly appreciate the interest and dedication of FAU personnel to the OCGen project. We very much look forward to working with such a qualified and committed people."

Florida Keys Electric Cooperative, a prospective customer of OCGen-generated power, welcomed the prototype project as a major step in demonstrating the potential of the Florida Current as a future contributor to the overall energy supply portfolio in Florida.

"We look forward to this project succeeding and ultimately providing a clean, reliable local source of affordable renewable energy for our customers," said Florida Keys Electric Cooperative CEO Scott Newberry.

FAU will provide site-specific oceanographic studies, mooring system and radio-transmitting buoy designs, on-shore facilities, as well as logistics and planning assistance.