For Immediate Release

OMSI OPENS RENEWABLE ENERGY EXHIBIT
New Permanent Museum Offering Puts Finishing Touch on Transformed Earth Hall

Portland, Ore. (December 27, 2012) – Aside from being ideal conditions for windsurfing … what do wind, waves, and sun all have in common? They are all sources of renewable energy and each will be showcased at OMSI in a new permanent, bilingual exhibit officially opening January 17, 2013. Renewable Energy/Energía Renovable invites OMSI visitors to learn about emerging sources of energy as well as consider the tradeoffs involved in using any energy source. Interactive exhibit pieces demonstrate how alternative technologies can be integrated into the existing power grid and how visitors’ individual energy choices affect the environment.

“Using energy to efficiently power our lights, TVs, heaters, toys and more requires engineering, innovation and creativity,” said Chris Stockner, OMSI energy and the environment spokesperson. “It’s important to us to serve as a community resource to help people become good energy stewards and learn about the renewable energy technology that increasingly powers our lives.”

Renewable Energy/Energía Renovable is part of OMSI’s energy and the environment strategic initiative and completes the recent transformation of the museum’s Earth Hall, alongside the new sustainability-themed Clever Together exhibit. Hands-on exhibit features focus on the unique energy mix of the Pacific Northwest.

“This region leads the nation in sustainable decision-making, the development of renewable technologies, and research into next-generation green materials,” Stockner added. “Reflecting the Northwest’s ongoing leadership in this important sector means becoming a regional source for renewable energy education.”

In addition to the exhibit, OMSI is offering related educational programming in several forms: traveling “tabletop” exhibits that have already made appearances at local fairs and science festivals, and new resource conservation-themed classroom programs for thousands of elementary and middle school students throughout the Northwest.

“The PGE team is proud to support the bilingual Renewable Energy exhibit where visitors can learn more about energy, technology and environmental sciences,” said Carol Dillin, PGE vice president of customer strategies and business development. “It’s great to see visitors getting a hands-on perspective of what it takes to balance energy resources like wind and solar in the most cost-effective and sustainable way.”

Major support for Renewable Energy/Energía Renovable was provided by title sponsors Portland General Electric, Meyer Memorial Trust, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, and The Collins Foundation, and by presenting sponsors Vestas and Iberdrola Renewables. Additional support was provided by sponsors SolarWorld and Bonneville Power Administration, and by Mentor Graphics, Christenson Electric, Oregon Wave Energy Trust, Union Bank, Pacific Power Foundation and Energy Trust of Oregon.
Renewable Energy/Energía Renovable

Exhibition Overview:

Windy Inspirations
Visitors explore the variety of shapes used to capture wind by directing a blower at several model wind devices, both historic and modern. The action illuminates lights in the landscape.

Turbine Controller
Two control stations allow visitors to explore the geometry of commercial turbines. One station manipulates a large model turbine, while the other features a computer simulation where visitors must optimize a virtual turbine for changing wind conditions.

Electricity in Motion
A two-sided exhibit demonstrates how electricity can be generated by moving a magnetic field around a coil of wire. A crank manipulates a rotary generator to demonstrate the principal as used with wind turbines. A plunger manipulates a linear generator similar to that used in simple wave energy devices.

Waves at Work
Visitors can manipulate the float on a large model buoy and view a simulated electrical current generated within the coil housed in the spar. A large graphic and immersive audio provide the context of a future offshore wave energy park.

Inside Solar
Computer animation guides visitors through the inner workings of a solar cell. Visitors follow photons as they are absorbed by the cell, exciting electrons to move through a circuit and power electronic devices.

Made in Oregon
A display of artifacts from SolarWorld’s Hillsboro, Ore. facility illustrates the process of manufacturing solar cells (and assembling those cells into solar panels), taking place every day in Oregon.

Smart Energy
In the style of an “I spy” game, visitors search a home for objects and materials that might represent energy solutions. Along with emerging technologies designed for more effective energy use, the exercise features many storage options that could help ensure the continuity of renewable energy sources.

Power Up Portland
Visitors enter a control room where they adjust the inputs of a simulated electric grid. Visitors must respond to the changing demands of a large city as they weigh the economic, environmental, and social tradeoffs of a variety of energy sources.

About OMSI
Founded in 1944, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) is one of the nation’s leading science museums, a world-class tourist attraction, and an award-winning educational resource for the kid in each of us. OMSI is located at 1945 SE Water Avenue, Portland, OR 97214. For general information, call 503.797.4000 or visit www.omsi.edu.

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