



A Blazing Success Photovoltaic Testing Laboratory Holds its Ten-Year Anniversary Open House

The Photovoltaic Testing Laboratory at Arizona State University (PTL) celebrated its ten-year anniversary on April 3, 2002. Several guests and celebrated speakers attended this one-day event that began with a brief series of lectures by the lab founders, university officials, and energy industry professionals. The Open House concluded with a walk-through tour and demonstration of test facilities by lab personnel.

On November 25, 1991, Dr. Charles Backus, Dr. Byard Wood, and Mr. Bob Hammond met in Tempe, Arizona and agreed to establish an independent solar testing facility at ASU with a projected start date of January 1, 1992. At the time, there were only two independent testing labs in the solar industry - both located in Europe.



Left-to-right: Dr. Charles Backus, Bob Hammond, and Dr. Byard Wood.

At the beginning, the PTL worked under contract to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, DOE). The purpose of this contract was to develop the criteria for PV module certification and laboratory accreditation. Since then, the PTL has grown into an internationally recognized and respected laboratory, accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), PowerMark Corporation's Global Approval Program for Photovoltaics (PVGAP), and the International Electro-technical Committee Quality (IECQ) program.

The PTL is located at the Arizona State University East campus in Mesa, Arizona, where it's clear blue skies can accumulate about 9

kWh/m²/day on a 2-axis tracking flat-plate PV collector.



Taking a look around...guests and experts tour the PTL's "backyard".

Because of the PTL's affiliation with Arizona State University, graduate and undergraduate students in differing fields of technology are able to gain real-world experience and develop their working skills for life beyond school, while contributing to a valuable resource for renewable energy.



PTL student workers and their Test Manager (far right).

The PTL provides testing to the PV industry for IEEE 1262, IEC61215 and IEC61646 standards. It is also recognized as a Third Party Testing Lab by Underwriters Laboratories for the UL1703 Standard for Safety for Flat Plate Photovoltaic Modules and Panels.