

Press Release

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Adolf Goetzberger among Finalists for “European Inventor of the Year 2009”

European Patent Office nominates Founder of Fraunhofer ISE for his Lifetime Achievement

Prof. Adolf Goetzberger, founder of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE, is one of the finalists for the European Inventor of the Year Award 2009. March 2009, the European Patent Office EPA and the European Commission announced the twelve nominees for this year's prize. The themes of energy, environment and health dominate the nominated inventions this year. The award is presented to outstanding inventors in four categories: industry, SME/research, non-European countries, lifetime achievement. The winners in each category will be announced during a gala evening on 28th April 2009 in Prague, Czech Republic.

Adolf Goetzberger's achievements as the father of the commercial use of solar energy and as founder of Fraunhofer ISE, the largest European solar energy research institute in Freiburg were acknowledged by the jury. Through his research and publications, he has laid the foundations for alternative energy production using solar energy. Goetzberger has been nominated in the category "lifetime achievement".

The European Inventor of the Year Award symbolizes the force of human innovation as the basis for technological, economic and social progress. Past winners of the award include the Nobel Prize physicist Peter Grünberg (2006) and Erik de Clercq (2008), developer of the AIDS cocktail.

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Adolf Goetzberger, who celebrated his 80th birthday last year at a gala with Fraunhofer ISE staff and his longtime companions, worked in the field of semiconductors during the first 25 years of his professional life. He was employed at the top addresses in U.S. research: at the Shockley Laboratory in California with the Nobel Prize winner and co-inventor of the transistor William Shockley and at Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, New Jersey. In 1968 the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft brought Goetzberger back to Germany. Up to the founding of Fraunhofer ISE, he served as the director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Solid State Physics IAF in Freiburg. In 1971, the University of Freiburg appointed him as honorary professor in the Department of Physics. Throughout his active professional life, he supervised many diploma and doctoral students.

At the end of the 1970's, Goetzberger began making his vision a reality by planning a solar research institute within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. In 1981, Fraunhofer ISE was founded with a staff of 18. The amount of perseverance and pioneer spirit which lay behind the development of this project back then is difficult to imagine in today's world. Later, Goetzberger succeeded in acquiring the financing for the Energy Self-Sufficient House – an inhabited laboratory using technologies that are still considered groundbreaking today. It is Goetzberger's efforts that are also responsible for bringing the residence of the world headquarters of the International Solar Energy Society ISES to locate in Freiburg.

When Prof. Goetzberger reached retirement age in 1993 and stepped down from his position as Institute Director, Fraunhofer ISE had already grown to take its place as the second largest solar energy research institute in the world, following after the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in the USA. Under the leadership of his successors Prof. Joachim Luther (1993-2006) and Prof. Eicke R. Weber (since 2006), the Institute has continued to increase in size. Today with a staff of 830, it is the second largest institute within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

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In 1983, Adolf Goetzberger was the first German to receive the J.J. Ebers Award from the IEEE Electron Devices Society for his superior technological achievements in the field of electronic components.

Many are the distinguished solar awards received by Adolf Goetzberger: Medal of Merit from the Land Baden-Württemberg (1989), Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (1992), Achievement through Action Award (ISES, 1993), honorary doctoral title from the University Uppsala (1995), Farrington Daniels Award (ISES, 1995), Karl Boer Medal (1997), Becquerel Prize (1997), William R. Cherry Award (IEEE, 1997), Einstein Award 2006 of the Solar World AG (2006), European Solar Prize (EUROSOLAR, 2006).

Adolf Goetzberger remains actively involved in the field of solar energy. He serves as a consultant for Fraunhofer ISE, goes to work daily and continues to write publications and patents.

The European Inventor of the Year 2009 award ceremony will be held in conjunction with the European Patent Forum and PATINNOVA 2009. At this festive gala the inventors and inventions will be honored that have made an outstanding and enduring contribution to technological progress, and thus the strength of the economy, in Europe. The prize is co-sponsored by the European Commission and the European Patent Office EPA.

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More information:

<http://www.epo.org/about-us/events/epf2009.html>

Text of the PI and photo can be downloaded from our web page: www.ise.fraunhofer.de



Prof. Adolf Goetzberger, Source: Fraunhofer ISE