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Sunpower Operates First ASC-E3 Stirling Convertors

Athens, Ohio – March 13, 2012

Sunpower, Inc., an Athens-based company, announces the successful first run of its latest free-piston Stirling convertor, the ASC-E3. The first ASC-E3 convertor ran today, generating electrical power in a test cell within the company's Athens, Ohio facility using electrically-generated heat to simulate a space systems heat source.

The ASC-E3 is the most recent member of the Advanced Stirling Convertor (ASC) family developed under contract to the NASA Glenn Research Center and serves as the production pathfinder for the ASC-Flight convertors currently being built by Sunpower under contract to Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. Like all free-piston Stirling convertors, the ASC-E3 converts heat into electric power. The Advanced Stirling Convertor is integrated into the Lockheed Martin Advanced Stirling Radioisotope Generator that may be selected for potential NASA Discovery Class missions scheduled for launch in 2016.

Sunpower is the world leader in free-piston Stirling engines (convertors), cryocoolers, and linear compressors integrated into environmentally friendly, long-lived, and high efficiency solutions. Applications include remote power generation, combined heat and power generation (cogeneration), medical devices, and nuclear material detection devices. The company was incorporated in 1974 by William Beale, inventor of the free-piston Stirling engine, and remains a privately held corporation.