

Arctic Energy Summit's Technology Conference Post Conference Report

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Submitted by Ben Ellis

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Sustainable Development Working Group

Amid a backdrop of extraordinary environmental changes in the Arctic, more than 300 international delegates from 14 nations explored a plethora of extractive and renewable energy resources within the Far North to meet the growing world hunger for energy.

“We need to work every day to expand energy production,” U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski told the gathering at the Arctic Energy Summit's Technology Conference, “while we also find new technologies to greatly reduce carbon emissions to slow and ultimately stop any climate change that may be occurring as a result. We need to increase, not curtail, fossil fuel production, so it can provide a bridge to the alternative technologies of the future.”

The conference, an International Polar Year event and sanctioned by the eight-nation Arctic Council, convened scientists, academicians, policy makers and people who live in the Arctic to grapple with the summit theme of the Arctic as an emerging energy province. With the U.S. Department of State as the official host, the summit was organized and executed by Anchorage-based Institute of the North

The four-day event was divided into big picture plenary sessions and specific technical papers and panel discussions. There were inspiring presentations by international leaders, such as President Olafur Grimsson, of Iceland when he spoke about how his nation has embraced geothermal and hydrogen as energy resources; and there were technical breakout sessions as specific as ‘Power Engineering of Russia's North-East’ and ‘An Amalgamated Approach to Rural Generation: A Case Study in Sustainability.’

During the conference, eight panels were convened to discuss: Policy experiences in Developing Energy Assets in the Arctic; Developing Human Resources for Arctic Energy Development; Development of Rural Energy in the Arctic; Shipping and Transportation Options for the Arctic; Environmental Concerns in Developing Arctic Energy Assets; Infrastructure and the Impact of Climate Change; Impacts of Energy Development on the People of the North; and Energy Security- the Arctic's Role in Global Security. (See Attachment A for a description of the panel topics and a list of moderators.)

His Excellency Ólafur Ragnar Grimsson, president of the Republic of Iceland, participated in the conference as the guest of honor during the Wednesday evening closing banquet, receiving the Institute of the North's Robert O. Anderson Sustainable

Arctic Award for his leadership in promoting geothermal and hydrogen energy in the Arctic. The Institute of the North established the Robert O. Anderson Sustainable Arctic Award in 2001 to recognize individuals, organizations and/or nations that make outstanding contributions toward sustainable development within the Arctic. Mr. Anderson was the first recipient, recognized for his vision for advancing enlightened development within a sustainable environment when he served as the president and CEO of Atlantic Richfield and president of the Aspen Institute. Other recipients include Vincent Ostrom and U.S. Senator Ted Stevens

Conference delegates came from the U.S., Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, India, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

In collaboration with Iceland and the Arctic Portal, the two plenary days of the conference were streamed live to the Arctic Portal website. Days two and three were video recorded. It is anticipated that the entire conference will be archived on the Arctic Portal within a few weeks, allowing the world to watch and listen to the presentations and panel discussion. My deepest gratitude goes to Ragnar Baldursson and Halldor Johannsson, the portal manager, for this remarkable contribution to the summit.

The conference, held in Anchorage, Alaska, is the first phase of a two-year IPY project. An Arctic Energy Action Team is being formed to cooperatively develop an international vision and programmatic way forward to address common problems related to the development and deployment of energy in the Arctic. The team is being charged with exploring challenges and opportunities in three areas of the Arctic: extractive energy, renewable and hybrid energy sources, and the deployment of economical and environmentally sensitive energy sources to rural Arctic communities.

Responding to a call at the closing plenary session of the conference, 21 individuals met to discuss how to constitute the action team. Another 30 conference delegates expressed an interest in being involved in the follow up work but were unavailable to participate in the meeting due to flight schedules. The group, convened by Jim Hemsath, senior fellow for energy at the Institute of the North, agreed that the team be divided into subsets to address the three areas of interest. Additional action team members are welcome and the group encourages members from a diverse background. Using the SDWG website, the group plans to meet via the internet to work on their assignments with the goal of producing findings and recommendations by the winter of 2008. It is anticipated that a second conference will be held to roll out the document. It is envisaged that the document would then be offered to the SDWG/SAOs for consideration to be included in the Norwegian ministerial meeting in the spring 2009. (See Attachment B for a detailed account of action team.)

Funding support for the Summit came from a variety of sources. Platinum sponsorships (\$50,000) were provided by BP, the Government of Canada and the State of Alaska. The U.S. Department of Energy contributed \$25,000 as Gold Sponsor. Silver sponsors (\$15,000) were comprised of BG North America, the Denali Commission and Shell. The

conference briefcase sponsors (\$5,000 each) were the U.S. Arctic Research Commission and the Arctic Athabaskan Council. Other corporate sponsors (\$2,000-\$1,000) included TDX Power, Agrium, the Alaska Energy Authority, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, the Alaska Power Association, Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. and CH2M Hill.

Sponsorship opportunities through the Institute of the North are still available for the action team, educational outreach and final report phase of the summit.