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SunTechnics installs PV on U.S. Embassy in Geneva

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Sacramento, October 3, 2005. The newly-designed façade of the U.S. Mission in Geneva, Switzerland is the largest building-integrated photovoltaic installation in the Canton of Geneva, from the market-leading solar company SunTechnics. Kevin Moley, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Pamela Pitzer Willeford, U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, as well as General Charles E. Williams, Director and Chief Operating Officer of the State Department's Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) officially inaugurated the operation of the solar power plant, in the presence of numerous guests in September. The project demonstrates in an exemplary manner how already existing building surfaces can be used for environmentally-friendly energy production. "In total, four different mounting techniques demonstrate the range of photovoltaic utilization opportunities, from façade-integrated solutions all the way to roof-mounted systems," Sylvère Leu, Managing Director of SunTechnics. New is that even with an existing building, a convincing architectural integration can be carried out using standard modules, which increases the building's value. Moving forward, installations on the Conference Center and the main building will deliver electricity with a peak power of around 118 kilowatts in total into the public grid. This is enough to cover the annual energy needs of over 20 private households. A large display in the entry foyer will show visitors on-going installation data in future. "With the newly designed US Mission, we want to publicly give a signal for environmentally-friendly energy production. At the same time, the renovation is an outstanding example for successful international cooperation," General Williams declared.

The four different installation types are installed on the main building, and on the Conference Center and Stair Tower adjoining the southwest façade. The southwest façade of the main building is equipped with SunShades which are fitted with a tilt angle of 65 degrees into the balustrade above the rows of windows. 350 modules are installed over welded aluminum consoles like an awning. "The installation of the modules – to the millimeter exactly – at the planned angle makes for perfect integration. The rows of modules also provide shade as an additional function, thus helping to achieve an optimum room climate," explains Leu. Framed bare panels inserted at the side provide tailor-made installation and absorb any shadowing through the column-sectionalized façade. The cable ducts running along the side of the façade structure are recessed, with tailor-made overlays. A pre-assembled perforated sheet protects the construction from below. In this way, birds are kept from nesting, the modules are ventilated from the rear and at the same time the integrating character of the entire construction is emphasized. Together with two rows of modules that are also attached to the southeast façade, a total peak power of around 48 kW is achieved via the SunShades.

The solar technology is hung vertically on the southeast and southwest sides of the Conference Center and on the southwest façade of the 20-meter high Stair Tower on the main building. A special profile system made of stainless steel edging components enables the level and simple mounting of the solar panels. The modules are hung into the edging components and secured with screws. The façade installations produce solar electricity with a total peak power of around 25 kilowatts.

With a special installation system, the flat roofs of the Conference Center and the main building are also used to produce energy: The modules are installed horizontally so that the installations lie on the top of the building like a smooth surface with a pitch angle of zero degrees. For this power-light technology, frameless laminate modules are inserted into quadratic, grooved lightweight concrete bases with thermal insulation. This installation also has multi-functionality, i.e. electricity generation and simultaneously thermal insulation. The surface load is minimal. The foundation is constructed to allow circulation of air and can also withstand major wind forces. The peak power of the roof installations totals around 25 kilowatts. In addition, an awning with a peak power of around 10 kilowatts is attached to the side of the main building in a southeast alignment. 36 extensive double-paned modules are braced on the façade on a special steel construction, flush to the edge, with a pitch angle of 35 degrees. The awning is subject to high wind forces due to its height of over 20 meters and geographic setting. An additional support of the façade guarantees the necessary stability. As well as producing electricity, a new usable space has been won beneath the façade as an added use.

ABOUT SUNTECHNICS

With an anticipated installed peak output of over 60 MWp for 2005, SunTechnics is Europe's leading planning and sales company for renewable energy systems. SunTechnics installs customized, turnkey solutions including photovoltaics, solar thermal, and bio-energy. With these product-specific and international advances, SunTechnics, now employing a workforce of over 200, continues to grow faster than the rapidly-expanding market. For more information you can call the toll-free information hotline at 1-888-SUN-TEC1 or, on the Internet, go to www.SunTechnics.com.