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## **First Solar to Build Solar Module Factory in Mesa, Arizona**

### **New Factory Will Create 600 Jobs Annual Production of More Than 250MW**

TEMPE, Ariz. – March 17, 2011 – First Solar, Inc. (Nasdaq: FSLR) today announced it will build its new U.S. manufacturing center in Mesa, Ariz. First Solar will invest about \$300 million in the factory, which will create approximately 600 jobs and will include four manufacturing lines with a capacity to produce more than 250 megawatts (MW) of advanced thin-film photovoltaic (PV) modules per year. The new factory, in combination with First Solar's recently expanded facility in Perrysburg, Ohio, will increase First Solar's U.S. production capacity to more than 500MW per year.

Construction will begin in the second quarter of 2011 and is expected to last a year, creating an average of 400-500 construction jobs. Module shipments are scheduled to begin in the third quarter of 2012. The facility is located on a 135-acre site that was previously home to a General Motors vehicle testing facility and is designed to accommodate future expansion. The facility will include a 3MW rooftop solar installation as well as an extensive ground-mounted PV testing facility. The factory will utilize First Solar's continuous manufacturing process which transforms a sheet of glass into a complete solar module in less than 2.5 hours, which contributes to the industry-leading energy payback time and low carbon footprint of systems utilizing First Solar's thin-film modules.

"Supportive state and federal policies have provided the visibility needed for the U.S. to become our fastest-growing market, and the Mesa factory will enable us to meet that growing demand," said Bruce Sohn, President of First Solar. "Programs such as Department of Energy loan guarantees and the solar investment tax credit are crucial to helping the renewable energy industry quickly reach the scale needed to compete with fossil fuels. Over the long-term, programs like these facilitate the market growth and investment that will support the future expansion of this factory."

"First Solar's presence in Arizona has been a great engine in driving our renewable energy sector forward," said Arizona Governor Jan Brewer. "And now its plans for a 135-acre technology campus – with 600 quality jobs and the potential for hundreds more – will propel Arizona into its second century, while promoting the Arizona Commerce Authority's plan for business attraction, retention and expansion. We are grateful that First Solar's leadership has confidence in my Cornerstones of Reform – including the Arizona Competitiveness Package. "

"The U.S. has always led the world in innovation and Arizona is proud to be on the leading edge of the energy evolution," said Arizona Senator John McCain. "First Solar's announcement to build a new factory in Mesa and deploy their domestically manufactured modules in solar projects like Agua Caliente in Yuma County will not only create job opportunities for Arizonans but also represents another important step toward greater energy security."

"First Solar's investment is significant for both Mesa and our region," said Mesa Mayor Scott Smith. "The location also confirms the Gateway area's potential to become a major center of economic growth, innovation and high-wage jobs."

The new Mesa facility is approximately 30 minutes from First Solar's corporate headquarters in Tempe, Ariz., where it employs about 200 associates. First Solar also is currently building two utility-scale PV projects in Arizona, the 290MW Agua Caliente project in Yuma County for NRG Energy and the 17MW Paloma Solar Plant in Gila Bend for APS, which are expected to create more than 500 construction jobs. First Solar's North American project pipeline includes more than 2.4 gigawatts (GW) of projects expected to create approximately 2,000 construction jobs and drive \$6 billion of infrastructure investment over three years.

Like all of its PV modules, the entire production output of the Mesa factory will be part of First Solar's comprehensive, prefunded solar module collection and recycling program, the first of its kind in the industry. Anyone wishing to dispose of First Solar modules can request collection at any time, at no additional cost, and First Solar will pick up the modules and recycle up to 90% (by mass) of the material for use in new products, including new solar modules and new glass products.

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