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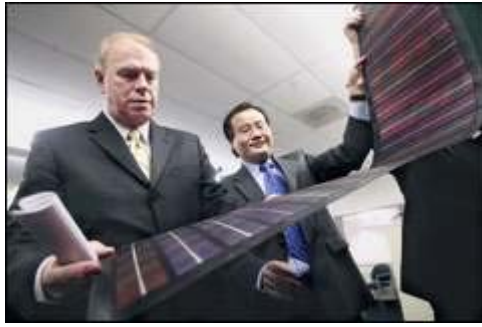
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Article published Thursday, November 29, 2007
 GOVERNOR VISITS UT INCUBATOR

Strickland touts Toledo alternate-energy hub

By **TOM HENRY**
 BLADE STAFF WRITER



Gov. Ted Strickland got an earful yesterday from local energy entrepreneurs and dignitaries, then extolled the virtues of his state energy plan he has gotten through the Ohio Senate and soon hopes to have taken up by the Ohio House.

Gov. Ted Strickland gets a closer look at the thin, flexible solar panels made by Xunlight with the local company's president and chief executive, Xunming Deng. (THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT)
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It all happened during a 90-minute visit to the University of Toledo Clean and Alternative Energy Incubator and its affiliated Wright Center for Photovoltaics Innovation and Commercialization.

The two facilities at Dorr Street and Westwood Avenue have become a regional hub for helping small businesses involved in solar and wind power, biomass fuel, and other forms of renewable energy hatch their ideas in conjunction with university research. Mr. Strickland toured them, then stepped outside to learn about a UT prototype vehicle that operates on fuel cells and a bus that runs on biomass fuel.

While the focus was on energy, Mr. Strickland took a moment to congratulate Toledo for being chosen the world's third "most-liveable community" of its size.

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He called Toledo "a wonderful community, an entrepreneurial community, a community that - in many ways - is an uncelebrated jewel."

He also dangled a carrot for the job-starved city.

Mr. Strickland said he spoke yesterday in Columbus with representatives from Isofoton, a 26-year-old company in Malaga, Spain, that is searching for a site to open its North American headquarters. It is one of Europe's largest producers of solar cells.

The governor said he told the company about the University of Toledo's solar research and companies that have blossomed because of it, including Phoenix-based First Solar LLC, the world's largest producer of thin-film solar panels. Most are made at the company's plant in Perrysburg Township.

Isofoton representatives told him they will choose their site from Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia, and Ohio, Mr. Strickland said.

Some of his comments were made while holding thin, light, and flexible solar panels developed by Xunlight, a Toledo company affiliated with the incubator and Wright Center which was recently featured in Newsweek.

Xunming Deng, Xunlight president and chief executive officer, told the governor he was attracted to Toledo because of UT's solar research.

Mr. Strickland said that while his energy plan sailed through the Senate, that isn't likely to be the case in the Ohio House.

The debate centers around Ohio's experience with its partially deregulated electric sector. Many experts believe it has never lived up to its potential.

"I want to tell you competition [in the electric sector] doesn't exist in Ohio. We're not going to tell you a market will work when there is no viable market," he said.

Mr. Strickland has promoted his energy plan as a job creator because it requires 25 percent of the state's energy to come from so-called "advanced technology" sources that include clean coal and nuclear upgrades by 2025 - both of which are expected to be mired in years of additional research and permitting.

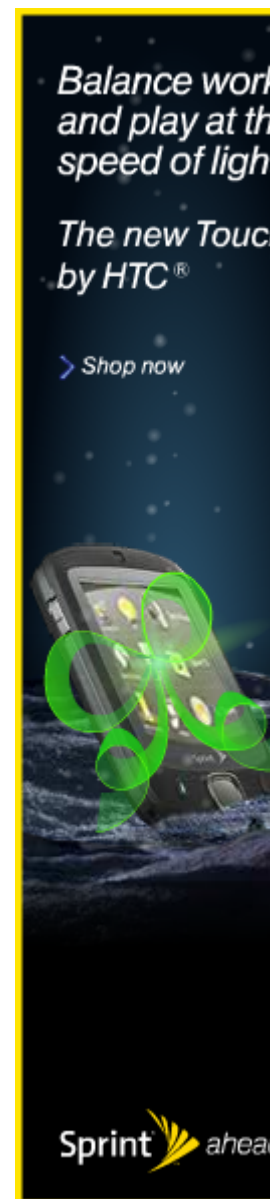
The plan requires only 12.5 percent from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, much less than the 20 percent commitment by 2020 that several states have adopted.

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