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Press release

THIRTY YEARS OF MONT-SOLEIL – OPENNESS AND INNOVATION

Marking its 30th year, **Société Mont-Soleil** takes stock of its work to develop solar energy and the technological advancements achieved over the years. **Société Mont-Soleil** knows that it owes its successful, wide-ranging innovations to the positive response and support it met within the Bernese Jura region. It has worked on numerous projects well known throughout the country, acting both independently and as a supporting partner. The global boom in solar energy has led to a progressive shift in the company's work. It is now investigating how photovoltaics can be further developed and used sustainably, with a focus on long-term research, integration into the power grid and battery technologies.

Société Mont-Soleil was founded in 1990 based on Elektrowatt Ltd.'s idea to build a large photovoltaic research and development center. Elektrowatt Ltd. and BKW Energy Ltd. (BKW) completed the project on Mont-Soleil (1,200 m above sea level) in the Bernese Jura.

Not only did Société Mont-Soleil, supported above all by BKW, AEW Energie AG and La Goule SA, have the largest solar power plant in Europe at the time (1992), but it also built a widely renowned photovoltaic test center on Mont-Soleil in 1995. Many important innovation projects have also been implemented on Société Mont-Soleil's own initiative or with its significant involvement. Some of the best-known projects include a large solar-powered catamaran on Lake Biel (2001), a solar power plant integrated into the roof of the Stade de Suisse (2005), a high alpine solar power plant on Jungfrauoch (2007) and solar cell tests for the Solar Impulse project by Bertrand Piccard (2009).

Information and higher professional training / «PhD Summer School Mont-Soleil»

On Mont-Soleil a strong emphasis is also placed on informing people, offering guided tours for visitors and providing specialized training. To date, around 1.5 million visitors were recorded. Working with the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, Société Mont-Soleil is implementing or has completed a large number of scientific development projects. Three years ago the «PhD Summer School Mont-Soleil» was launched. It aims to provide a doctoral program that is practice oriented, working closely especially with the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne and the Bern University of Applied Sciences in Biel as well as with the Universities of Berne and Neuchâtel and the high-alpine research institute Jungfrauoch.

Due to Covid-19 the Summer School 2020 has to be postponed to August 9 - 14, 2021.

Mont-Soleil PV module test field now online

With the growing importance of Mont-Soleil as an international photovoltaic field laboratory, amongst others, as part of the «Summer School Mont-Soleil», there is also increasing interest in web-based measurements. As an example of such an application, the photovoltaic laboratory at the Bern University of Applied Sciences in Burgdorf has developed a beta version of the data acquisition in the PV module test field on Mont-Soleil (see www.pv-test.ch/montsoleil.php).

Entreprises partenaires:

BKW Energie SA, AEW Energie AG, Société des Forces Electriques de La Goule SA, AEK Energie AG, onyx Energie Mittelland AG

Partenaires affiliés:

Bourgeoisie de Saint-Imier, Municipalité de Saint-Imier.