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MEDIA INQUIRIES

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USTDA Director Zak Kicks off U.S.-South Africa Smart Grid Workshop

JOHANNESBURG – In support of South Africa’s goal to provide universal access to reliable, affordable electricity through clean energy resources and technologies, USTDA is hosting a smart grid workshop in Johannesburg from October 25-26, 2011. Joining Director Zak in opening the event is U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Donald Gips.

USTDA joined sponsors General Electric, OSIsoft, Earth Networks, Cisco, and Comverge in hosting the two-day event. The workshop is designed to create lasting partnerships to strengthen strategic and commercial ties between the U.S. and South African smart grid industries. It will also explore state-of-the-art technologies, equipment, and services, as well as policies, regulations, and financing mechanisms that can support the implementation of smart grid projects in South Africa.

“Together, we can build the relationships and share the knowledge necessary to accomplish South Africa’s power infrastructure goals,” stated Director Zak. “Investments in smart grid technologies not only help to improve energy efficiency and customer service, but they can also lessen the burden on South Africa’s power generation infrastructure. This reduces emissions and benefits the environment.”

Recognizing that access to electricity, long considered essential to economic development, is of particular importance in South Africa’s rapidly expanding economy, USTDA has committed ongoing support to the sector. Two examples of this cooperation will be profiled at the workshop. USTDA supported eThekweni Electricity’s (TE) efforts to deploy an integrated IT system that will allow TE to tie its customer data with supply information in real time, resulting in more cost-effective service and quicker responses to network and system problems. USTDA is also working with TE on the deployment of smart metering systems to help manage demand for power.

Additionally, USTDA is continually committed to proactively seeking new opportunities to support South Africa’s clean energy sector. A follow-up reverse trade mission to bring South African smart grid leaders to the United States is anticipated for early 2012.

More information about the workshop can be found on USTDA’s website at <http://www.ustda.gov>.

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The U.S. Trade and Development Agency helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority development projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project planning activities, pilot projects, and reverse trade missions while creating sustainable infrastructure and economic growth in partner countries.

