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The Research Partnership to Secure Energy for America (RPSEA)— An Action Program for America's Energy Future

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Abstract

The Research Partnership to Secure Energy for America (RPSEA) doubled its membership in just two years as it combined a congressional mandate with a leveraged research, development, demonstration and commercialization process designed to bring United States consumers more domestic natural gas and oil at lower cost. Congress primed the effort when it passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct), delivering legislation for the Department of Energy for a program that would speed access to the nation's ultra-deepwater, unconventional and other petroleum resources with particular attention to passing production technology to small producers.

Background

The Department of Energy's (DOE) National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) competitively selected RPSEA in May 2006 and signed an oversight contract with RPSEA on January 4, 2007. RPSEA went to work with a budget of \$37.5 million a year in directed spending for 10 years not subject to congressional appropriation, plus a core of 70 members and a plan to leverage its research money into the most effective research partnership ever assembled for the energy industry. Partnership and membership form the foundation of the RPSEA open innovation public/private partnership. Together, they build the research steps to maximize the value of domestic resources through more efficient and lower cost exploration, drilling and production techniques in three program components—Ultra-Deepwater (UDW), Unconventional Resources and Small Producer. NETL internally manages an additional \$12.5 million research program that is complementary to and supportive of RPSEA for a combined annual program of \$50 million. Also, NETL has oversight responsibility for RPSEA and the entire program

RPSEA members come from every corner of the energy industry. Producers of all sizes identify real-world field challenges and drive RPSEA toward solutions that work in everyday operations. Service companies offer a long history of meeting those challenges with sophisticated research facilities geared to affordable solutions. Universities compile the latest techniques and technologies, add post-graduate innovation and pass that learning to others. Public and private organizations, including the national laboratories, lend a focused approach as they help transfer potential new technology to field applications. Together, they create a powerful partnership within the organization and the scope to bring additional resources to bear on specific industry needs.