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World's top solar thermal experts to lecture at University Pretoria

The world's top solar thermal experts offer a specialist workshop on "Solar Heat for Industrial Applications" at the University of Pretoria on 3 and 4 February 2014.

The audience of 36 is exclusively limited to persons who have attended previous SOLTRAIN courses, or have experience with large solar water systems in Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

This Train-the-Trainer workshop is part of the unique Southern African Training and Demonstration Initiative (SOLTRAIN), sponsored by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The Pretoria University workshop is coordinated by the Sustainable Energy Society of Southern Africa (SESSA). "Train-the-Trainer" entails that the recipients of this specialist training are committed to disseminate the knowledge they received.

"South Africa and the SADC region urgently need this expertise", says Prof Dieter Holm, regional SOLTRAIN coordinator, "and this is a cost-effective way of creating decent long-term jobs". Project leader, Werner Weiss, concurs: "Southern Africa has twice Austria's sunshine".

The University of Pretoria is South Africa's and SADC's leader in the use of solar water heating in their student residences. The University is also building a thermal demonstration unit for practical experiments by students. The Pretoria campus falls within the SOLTRAIN Solar Thermal Flagship District where various installations can be visited by technical tourists and political decision-makers.

Southern Africa boasts 59% of the world's best winter sunshine area, but does not rank among the global solar thermal leaders. "Not yet", says Holm, "but, given enabling legislation and leadership by example in government buildings, we would create a sustainable and competitive solar water heating industry in the region. A strong local solar water heating industry will earn forex, reduce our chronic regional electricity problem, reduce pollution and contribute to achieving our environmental commitments".

contact: dieterholm@worldonline.co.za
www.soltrain.co.za