standardised inverter to receive UL listing to date.

**For more information contact:** Xantrex Technology Inc, 8999 Nelson Way, Burnaby, BC V5A 4B5, Canada. Tel: 604-422-8595, www.xantrex.com

## Strategic distribution

**EcoEnergies, which has completed a 220 kW installation for PowerLight near Fountain Valley in southern California and is currently working on a project near San Jose, has signed a strategic distribution agreement with PowerLight to supply PowerGuard products.**

The solar product is for flat roofs, being easy to install and not requiring roof penetration. The lightweight PV roofing protects the roof from the damaging effects of weather and UV radiation. The insulation properties of PowerGuard also reduce energy costs for heating and cooling, especially during hours of peak electrical demand.

**For more information contact:** Eco Energies Inc, 171 Commercial Street, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, USA. Tel: 408-746-3062. Email: watts@ecoenergies.com

## Japan & Norway joint venture for poly Si solar

**Komatsu Ltd in Japan and Renewable Energy Corp. of Norway have signed a letter of intent to set up a joint venture to make polycrystalline silicon for solar applications.**

The two will initially hold an equal stake in the joint venture, but the Norwegian company is expected to take a majority interest in the firm in the future. Komatsu and Komatsu Electronic Metal are developing new methods and equipment to produce defect-free, high-quality silicon wafers with high throughput production.

**For more information contact:** Komatsu Ltd, 2-7 Motoakasaka 1-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8388, Japan. Tel: +81-3-3404-3311.

## ECD revenues and losses

**Operating results for Energy Conversion Devices Inc (ECD) for Q3 ended March 2002 saw revenues increase by 38% to $24.4m, compared to $17.7m in Q3 last year. However, the net loss was $5m compared to $4.2m in the same quarter last year.**

The loss resulted primarily from an increase in the net cost of product development ($643,000), reduced royalties ($271,000), reduced other revenues ($427,000), increased patent defence expenses ($175,000), protecting intellectual property (patent) expenses ($230,000), and improved margins on product sales ($133,000).

'Revenue growth is from machine-building contracts with positive margins,' said Stanford Ovshinsky, ECD's president and CEO. 'We are now optimising the solar cell production equipment we designed and built for United Solar, our photovoltaic JV with Bekaert. With production efficiency built into our manufacturing equipment we expect to increase our annual production capacity beyond 25 MW.'

ECD has appointed Jeffrey Harvey as senior VP marketing. Previously he was development director at Chevron Energy Solutions.

**For more information contact:** www.ovonic.com

## Batch track software

**Attain software from the Danish provider Navision has been selected by SolarWorld AG as its new ERP software.**

After a comprehensive market research, the arguments in favour of Attain were: flexibility, good price-performance and short introduction time. Software is scheduled to go live in Q4 of 2002. Commissioning will be handled with CosmoConsult AG, the largest German Navision Solution Center.

Navision Attain will be used by SolarWorld AG and subsidiaries in accounts, sales, distribution, purchasing, inventory management, logistics and production.

To allow continuous batch tracking at a sophisticated level in its solar cell plant, scheduled to start operation by the end of 2002, and in its module manufacture, SolarWorld is putting in uninterrupted batch tracking in its entire production process from silicon to product.

**For more information contact:** Navision a/s, Frydenlunds Allé 6, DK-2950 Vedbæk, Denmark. Tel: +45 4567 8000, www.navision.com

## AstroPower results

**AstroPower's product sales in its first quarter to 31 March 2002 increased to a record $20.4m, up 49.9% from the similar 2001 period. Product gross margin increased to 34.1% and income from operations increased to $2.6m.**

With net income increased to $2m, record manufacturing performance was driven 'by contributions from our fourth solar cell line, dedicated to running silicon-film wafers,' said president and CEO, Dr Allen Barnett.

'Our product mix in Q1 shifted significantly toward solar cells. This had the effect of reducing sequential quarterly revenue growth, but significantly increased product gross margins. For the balance of the year, we expect our product mix weighting to shift back toward modules and systems. This should lead to acceleration of revenue growth,' he added.

**For more information contact:** AstroPower, 300 Executive Drive, Newark, DE 19702-331A, USA. Tel: 302-366-0400, www.astropower.com

## Japanese capacities up

**Sharp is to double output capacity this year by building new production lines, investing about ¥10 bn ($79m), according to the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*.**

Sharp's output capacity would reach 200 MW, compared with the current 94 MW. The increased output capacity would be enough to power some 50,000 houses.

Kyocera will follow Sharp's lead, lifting output capacity by 20%, while Sanyo Electric [see *Comment*, page 16] would raise output by 40% as it resumed exports of solar cells last month for the first time since 1997.

In 2001 Sharp expected industry-wide solar cell output to soar at an annual rate of 40-50% over the next few years, with Japan accounting for over 50% of global production by 2003.

## Equipment funding

**GT Equipment Technologies Inc, parent of GT Solar, has secured $5m investment capital from Energy Fund of RBC Capital Partners, the private equity group of Royal Bank of Canada.**

Energy Fund partners Paul McDermott and Bruce Rothstein are elected to the GTE board.

**For more information contact:** GT Equipment Technologies Inc, 472 Amerherst Street, Nashua, NH 03063, USA. Tel: 603-883-5200, Email: info@gtequipment.com

## Moveable power

**Researchers at the School of Textiles at Heriot-Watt University in Scotland say they may be able to produce fabrics carrying solar cells which, when rolled up and carried, could power fireman or soldiers in remote locations.**

However, limited space available on clothing means that jackets with power for mobiles and laptops may still be some way off. Professor John Wilson says the team is looking at tent or tarpaulin panels that can be rolled up and transported easily.

**For information contact:** Heriot-Watt University, Netherdale, Galashiels, Selkirkshire TD1 3HF, UK. Tel: +44 1896 753 351. Email: enquiries@hw.ac.uk