Electric Power and Power Electronics Institute

INVITED SEMINAR
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SOLAR IN TEXAS: CURRENT LANDSCAPE AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

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Abstract
The number of solar-powered projects in the U.S. has increased significantly in the last five years bringing the total installed capacity to almost 4 GWs. This growth has been fueled primarily by state and local renewable energy mandates, most notably in the southwestern part of the country. Currently, Texas ranks 9th (2% of total installed capacity) among the states with solar installations despite having some of the best solar resource in the continental U.S. and having an attractive landscape for project development and investment. Slow growth in the state is attributed to lack of incentives and a recent decline in commodity prices. As the solar cost curve continues to come down there is the potential for a boom in solar development in the State, provided power prices return to levels seen in the mid-to-late 2000s and a renewable portfolio standard is implemented in the State. As the overall landscape improves, developers will have to wrestle with multiple hurdles including the need for transmission infrastructure in the western part of the State (where solar resource is strongest) and the dominance of mineral rights over surface rights.

Biography
Mr. Fuentes has served as Director of Development for NRG Energy Inc since June 2010. In this capacity, he is responsible for leading NRG’s power plant development and acquisition efforts across multiple technologies and fuels (including renewable energy projects) in the Gulf Coast Region. Mr. Fuentes has 15 years of experience in the energy industry in the areas of project management, business development, asset optimization, asset management, strategy and M&A. Prior to joining NRG, Mr. Fuentes served as Lead Analyst for Power Costs Inc. leading consulting engagements in the areas of asset optimization, asset valuation and risk analytics. Mr. Fuentes began his career in the Oil and Gas industry as engineer for Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA). Mr. Fuentes holds an MBA in Finance from University of Houston Cullen School of Business and Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.