

One Big Thing

U.S. Embassy Stockholm

April 2008 Newsletter

Maud Olofsson at WIREC 2008

In her keynote address at the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (see <http://www.wirec2008.gov/wps/portal/wirec2008>), Deputy Prime Minister Maud Olofsson said that Sweden has introduced special incentives, such as lower vehicle taxes and free parking and a mandate that major filling stations must offer at least one renewable fuel to promote the use of environmentally friendly cars. In a speech called 'One Country's Success Story,' she said that "Sweden has an almost fossil-free energy system - except for the transportation sector.



Renewable energy makes up 40 percent of our energy consumption. Oil's share of energy supply is less than a third and it will continue to decrease.

President Bush and Deputy Prime Minister Maud Olofsson talking at the Volvo display at the WIREC 2008 trade show (Photo courtesy of Volvo Group)

The deputy prime minister also had a chance to talk with President Bush when they both visited the AB Volvo display at the trade show. In his speech at the conference, the President referred to the "amazing joint venture with Mack and Volvo on these giant trucks that are using bio-diesel to power them... Five years ago those trucks would not have been available for people at this exhibit to look at. Today they're on the road. As a matter of fact, the United States Air Force is using these kinds of trucks. Things are changing."

Read the President's full remarks at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/03/20080305.html>

One Big Thing Goes Worldwide

The March issue of "State Magazine" (the official publication of the Department of State) featured a two-page article about the Embassy's "One Big Thing." The article listed the accomplished goals, including bringing together the U.S. Department of Energy, Sweden's Ministry of Enterprise and Volvo in a joint venture to test hybrid trucks in the United States.

It also mentioned that the first Fulbright Distinguished Professor in Alternative Energy Technology will begin teaching in Sweden this year, and the fact that all of the Embassy's electricity now comes from renewable sources.

The article includes pictures of key Swedish and American participants in the 'One Big Thing' in action.



One Big Idea

THE U.S. EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM PROMOTES ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

BY ROBERT HILTON

Swedes engaging the Swedish government and public to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives, the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm is encouraging U.S.-Swedish cooperation in seeking a breakthrough in alternative energy technology.

The effort, which the embassy calls the One Big Thing initiative, was directed from Ambassador Michael Wood's idea that a single big objective was needed for the embassy's work. By the time the One Big Thing was defined and announced in the Swedish press, the project's name was so ingrained the staff decided to keep using it.

Swedes support seeking an alternative energy breakthrough because it will help address global warming, a concern for many Swedes. The embassy has then generated goodwill and political capital that benefits all aspects of the bilateral relationship.

On 28 goals initially established for the first year of the One Big Thing, 25 have been completely or partially fulfilled. The complete list, posted on the embassy Web site, includes three initiatives:

- The ambassador and the Foreign Commercial Service created a list of 41 greenable Swedish companies in the green technology sector and distributed information about the three to various exporters.
- The embassy brought the U.S. Department of Energy, the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Value Corporation, maker of Mack Trucks, together in a \$1.2 million deal that will use hybrid trucks and efficient vehicle alternatives in the United States.
- The Department of Energy and Ministry of Enterprise agreed to cooperate in a variety of renewable energy research areas, and a binational working group identified U.S. and Swedish government funding programs for which Swedish and American partnerships can submit proposals.

The ambassador, in speeches and media events, outlined the U.S. policy on climate and energy issues and explained the One Big Thing.

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To read the full article, please see: <http://www.usemb.se/Environment/mar2008.pdf>

The 'One Big Thing' was also written up in "The Wall Street Journal," which on March 24 featured an article called 'Green Diplomacy.' Alexander Karsner, assistant secretary for energy efficiency and renewable energy at the Department of Energy, in the article said about Ambassador Wood: "His leadership has inspired a whole group of ambassadors who are sensitive to conservation in energy and the environment."

The full article can be read at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120605545304453209.html>

Stockholm's First Passive House

Ambassador Wood participated in a March 17 press showing of the first so-called "passive house" in the Stockholm area to see if there were ideas of interest to the United States. The insulation company Paroc, which develops and produces environmentally safe rock wool insulation products, is responsible for the project.

A passive house is an ultra-low energy building where the heat losses are so small that fresh air can be used as the heating system. The technique limits the heat loss by means of a climate shell with extra insulation and windows and doors with low U-values (a measure of how well a building material conducts heat). The building is compact and oriented so as to retrieve the maximum amount of solar energy.



Passive house owners Andreas Granbäck and Linda Wester together with Paroc project manager Anders Olsson and Ambassador Wood (Photo courtesy of FileCentral)

The EU is calling for a new European-wide building code that would require all new buildings to be "passive," beginning in 2016.

The code is already in force in Austria. Great Britain will follow in 2013 and Germany in 2014. Sweden has required buildings to have an energy declaration to document the energy consumption since 2008, but the proposed EU code is stricter.

DCM Participates in Moderate Climate Debate

During the Moderate Party's municipal conference in Gothenburg March 7-8, two seminars on climate and energy policy were the ones that drew the biggest crowds. At the seminar "Green Technology - the path to a better environment" Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, the Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, Robert Silverman, and Jan-Eric Sundgren, head of Volvo's Environment unit, discussed clean tech as a possible solution to the global climate problems.

In his presentation, Mr. Silverman explained the objectives and initiatives of the One Big Thing and updated the audience on recent developments in the United States. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, signed by the President in September, creates a huge market for bio fuels in the United States. It also requires improved gas mileage in U.S. vehicle fleets. Swedish technology can contribute to both of these new mandates. Mr. Silverman also discussed the Ambassador's list of investable Swedish clean tech companies. The Ambassador presented an updated version of the list to American investors in Boston on April 3. The new list is available here: <http://www.usemb.se/Environment/presscopy.pdf>

Sweden to Develop Hybrid Plug-in Cars

The Swedish government announced on March 14 that it will join forces with Sweden's car and energy industry to focus on developing green cars, particularly hybrid plug-in vehicles. The government will contribute with S.kr 240 million (\$39 million) to fund green-oriented vehicle research, and the Energy Agency will contribute additional S.kr 20 million (\$3,8 million) to the project. In total, S.kr 62 million (\$10 million) will be invested in the project.

"We have decided to cooperate in order to speed up the process of developing the next generation of cars and engines.

When companies, politicians and industry jointly decide to push issues, we gain better results. This could be the important technology leap we need to make in order to meet the climate challenge," Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Communications Maud Olofsson said in a statement.



Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Communications Maud Olofsson and Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren meet with representatives from Saab, Volvo, Vattenfall and the Energy Agency to discuss electric cars (SWEGOV photo)

The energy industry research agency Elforsk has estimated that if 70 percent of all Swedish vehicles were powered by electricity, carbon dioxide emissions from private traffic would be cut by 80 percent.

Ambassador Wood visited a regional green-car project in Kalmar County and applauded the county's plan to operate all vehicles in the county on alternative fuels by 2030. To reach that target, the region is investing in an electric car run on wind power.

U.S. to Invest \$13.7 Million for Breakthrough Solar Energy Projects

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that DOE will invest up to \$13.7 million, over the next three years, for 11 university-led projects that will focus on developing advanced solar photovoltaic (PV) technology manufacturing processes and products.

These projects are integral to President Bush's Solar America Initiative, which aims to make solar energy cost-competitive with conventional forms of electricity by 2015. Increasing the use of solar energy is also critical to diversifying our nation's energy sources in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil. Combined with a minimum university and industry cost share of 20%, up to \$17.4 million will be invested in these projects.

To read more, please visit: <http://www.energy.gov/news/6071.htm>

Do you want to read more about the Embassy's work with the One Big Thing?

Please see www.usemb.se/Environment

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