



GEOHERMAL RISING Bulletin

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Launch of Geothermal Rising: Using the Earth to Save the Earth

DR. WILL PETTITT, GEOHERMAL RISING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND CHARLIE FEINERMAN, TAOTI CREATIVE

Geothermal Resources Council is now Geothermal Rising. This speech was given at the Opening Session of GRC 2020 Annual Meeting & Expo, Monday, October 19, 2020. The video can be watched online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haKQ3_bJeis&t=1s

Since 1972, the Geothermal Resources Council has represented the interests of you, the geothermal community, as the world's largest direct-membership geothermal professional and trade association.

In that time, we've seen participation from thousands of people from over 33 countries, 240 companies, and 40 universities around the world.

More recently, in 2018, the Geothermal Energy Association became part of the Geothermal Resources Council, consolidating the two largest U.S.-based geothermal organizations into one and allowing us to speak with one voice for the whole community in the U.S.

I joined the Geothermal Resources Council as Executive Director in 2018. I've come from a background of consulting in subsurface science and engineering for 25 years. In those years, I worked in a wide range of energy disciplines, including nuclear waste, oil and gas reservoirs, energy storage, and mining.

Throughout that time, geothermal energy has been my passion and originally inspired me to get into geophysics. It inspired me simply because of what it is: a clean and renewable energy source that can make a difference to us all by helping to save our planet from climate change and pollution.

When I joined the GRC, the board assigned me a task. That task was to enact transformational change in the organization and the geothermal industry. That change goes hand-in-hand with rejuvenating and regenerating our organization and building on the consolidation of the two associations. In the past two years, we have restructured our board and our organization to better meet the needs of our membership.

We've moved to an association management company to bring in unique and broad expertise and experience to help us develop our program. We would not be hosting this virtual conference in the circumstances of COVID-19 if it weren't for these changes.

But there's more to the story. It was clear to the Board that we needed to change how we as an organization and industry are perceived outside of our geothermal community. We need to gain wider acceptance and appreciation of geothermal energy by the general public so that we can expand our reach and grow our industry.

Human beings historically have been more captivated by looking up than looking down. The wonders of the night sky have captivated us long before recorded history. This trend has continued in more recent ages, as more funding has been devoted to exploring the worlds beyond our own than the planet beneath our feet.

As of September 17, NASA's voyager 1 probe – launched in 1977, five years after the founding of the GRC– has travelled over 14 billion miles away from our planet. And while there are obvious challenges about drilling on Earth that don't exist in space, the deepest we've ever drilled is just over 7.5 m, or 12 km. Imagine what the Earth science community could do with more funding towards our programs.

This is just one example of our challenge.

Around the world, people are looking up at the sky and dreaming of great exploration, but not what's directly below our feet on this planet – the same planet we inhabit and rely upon for our existence.

A few years ago, I was involved in an initiative by the National Academy of Engineering called "Transparent Earth." This initiative recognized that our inability to see clearly within the Earth is a grand challenge for all disciplines of earth science and engineering.

That same challenge is why people don't easily see what's below us as accessible. They don't see this amazing potential that's at their fingertips if they were to just reach out for it, like they reach out for the stars.

It's clear that the public does not know the potential of geothermal energy. Imagine what we could do with effective messaging, so they discover what we know ...

That we can more effectively harness Earth's heat to meet humanity's growing need for clean energy.

For the geothermal industry to advance and rise to its full potential, we must rally the public to our cause.

We must show them the benefits of geothermal.

We must show them the overwhelming potential beneath our feet, just waiting to be tapped.

We must show them that we can use the Earth to save the Earth.

But how do we do that?

As many of you know, we brought on Taoti Creative, a creative marketing agency, at the outset of this year to help us answer this question. Of all the research they've done, perhaps the most interesting has been their analysis of the public's perception of geothermal energy.

Think about wind energy. Think about solar energy. These are third- and fifth-grade reading level terms, respectively. Geothermal is post-graduate.

Scientists and engineers own geothermal, not the general public.

When most people think about solar and wind, they think about sunny days, blustery plains, and nature.

For geothermal they think about drilling, volcanoes, and a technology they don't understand. Whether they're right or wrong, the public perceives geothermal energy as inaccessible, if they know about it at all.

After hearing this information, I myself have changed the way I talk about geothermal.

Geothermal is who we are and what we do. But when we reach out to the general public, society, and its leadership, we need to be more accessible, more approachable.

For too long the barrier to entry for people's acceptance of geothermal energy has been too high, so it's been left off the list of well-known renewable energy sources.

Our name can't be the Geothermal Resources Council!

We need to be more emotive and more dynamic. We need to show community and common purpose.

We need to speak more to the future of geothermal.

We need to be talking about the Earth and the huge body of heat that's beneath our feet that can serve human existence with clean energy forever and never falter.

We need to talk about using the heat from our Earth to help save our Earth. Something that's relatable to everybody.

For our industry to truly rise to its potential, we need to make a change. And that's just what we've done.



That's right folks, Geothermal Resources Council is now Geothermal Rising.

Over the coming few hours, you will see this new branding roll out across this digital platform and our online resources and communications.

Don't worry, the GRC name won't go away completely! Geothermal Rising retains our greatest commodity and brand recognition, and what most people perceive GRC to be.

We're renaming this annual meeting to be the Geothermal Rising Conference. Next year, our annual meeting and industry exhibition will be in San Diego, October 3 - 6, 2021. Looking forward to seeing you at the GRC!

As you heard in the video, we are shifting our focus towards being the champions of geothermal energy, as well as the champions for all those who make its use possible – all of you.

Our new association, speaking with one voice for the geothermal industry, is relevant today as we enter a renaissance period.

Using the talents of our new association management staff and creative marketing, we are building on our program and being progressive with a virtual conference, workshops, a new webinar series, and expanding our government relations through the Policy Committee – all now hand-in-hand with finding more effective connections with the general public and its leadership.

We are excited about our future. One in which we will show the world that we can use the Earth to save the Earth.